

Hoss makes first visit to Syria

DAMASCUS (AP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Salim Hoss arrived in Damascus Tuesday for his first visit to Syria since taking office last month. Hoss is expected to meet Syrian President Hafez Assad for talks on the Middle East peace process, the conflict in southern Lebanon and bilateral relations, Syrian officials said. Both countries have refused Israel's attempts to broker a separate peace treaty and maintain that any settlement must be based on the land-for-peace formula. Israel occupies the Golan Heights, a plateau in southwestern Syria. Israel also occupies a strip of south Lebanon which it maintains as a buffer against guerrilla incursions. There are almost daily clashes between Lebanese guerrillas and Israeli forces in and around the zone.

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King, Clinton discuss peace process, Iraq, bilateral ties

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton discussed on Tuesday at a White House meeting the Middle East peace process, Iraq and the bilateral relations.

The two leaders exchanged views on several issues in a very warm and substantial atmosphere," Jordanian Ambassador in Washington Marwan Muasher said, describing the half-an-hour meeting as a very "warm and substantial meeting."

"National Security Council Spokesman David Leavy told reporters in Washington Tuesday that King Hussein and Clinton also discussed ways that the United States might aid Jordan's ailing

economy.

Muasher told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview that the King and Clinton stressed the need for forging ahead with the implementation of the Wye River accord signed at the White House between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Oval Office talks between the King and the president also focused on the latest developments in the Iraq situation.

"The two leaders stressed the need for Wye accord to be implemented and to move forward and should not be (linked to) the Israeli elections," Muasher added.

"On the Middle East peace process, the King and the president agreed it was imperative to implement the Wye accords as negotiated," said Leavy.

The land-for-security agreement negotiated at Maryland's Wye Plantation in October was put on hold

last month when the Israeli cabinet made new demands of the Palestinians on security and political issues.

New elections in Israel scheduled for May 17 have further clouded peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

A U.S. official who asked not to be named told Reuters the two leaders discussed ways to aid Jordan's economy, hurt by the embargo against its neighbour, Iraq, but gave no details.

"Jordan is facing economic difficulties generally, which are compounded by a closed Iraq market," he said. "The president discussed ways that the United States can provide assistance — what steps we could take to help the Jordanian economy grow in 1999."

(Continued on page 12)

discussed in-depth during Tuesday's meeting."

"President Clinton showed understanding for the current economic situation, and promised that he'll do his best to help out," added Muasher.

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"Jordan is facing economic difficulties generally, which are compounded by a closed Iraq market," he said. "The president discussed ways that the United States can provide assistance — what steps we could take to help the Jordanian economy grow in 1999."



His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton on Tuesday discuss at a White House meeting the Mideast peace process, Iraq and bilateral ties (Reuters photo)

U.S. fighters fire on Iraqi planes

Agencies

FOUR U.S. fighter jets fired missiles at Iraqi planes Tuesday in the "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq, a senior U.S. administration official said.

It was the first American-Iraqi air-to-air confrontation in more than six years.

The U.S. missiles apparently failed to hit the Iraqi planes, although one Iraqi plane was believed to have crashed, apparently after running out of fuel, the official said.

The official Iraqi News Agency said Iraqi planes "confronted and clashed with the aggressive British and American aircraft" before the aggressive aircraft withdrew. All of our air force planes returned to base safely.

President Bill Clinton has said U.S. and British forces will continue bombing Iraqi flights in the restricted zones.

arguing that Saddam Hussein's military still represents a threat to minority Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south.

"The president has made it clear we will enforce the no-fly zones vigorously. The Iraqi violations are at their own peril," David Leavy, spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said Tuesday.

The Iraqi planes turned quickly after being fired upon, Bacon said. "They escaped without being shot down."

At a Pentagon briefing, Bacon defended the accuracy of the missiles.

"Air-to-air combat is an extremely engaging and demanding type of war," he said, adding there were still several unknowns, including the distance between the aircraft when the missiles were fired.

(Continued on page 12)

Israeli soldier injured in Hizbullah attack

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Lebanese guerrillas attacked Israeli troops outside a base in southern Lebanon on Tuesday, injuring one soldier. Lebanese security officials said.

The officials said Israeli military helicopters flew to the scene shortly after the incident. They picked up the wounded soldier and strafed nearby ravines where the attackers may have fled.

There was no immediate report of the incident from Israel.

The Lebanese security officials said a remote-controlled bomb went off shortly before 9 p.m. (1900 GMT) on the road outside Beaufort, a Crusader-built

castle where the Israelis maintain a base.

Guerrillas followed the bombing with rocket-propelled grenades and machine-gun fire that targeted a military vehicle, they added. They spoke on customary condition of anonymity.

The strategic Beaufort, which overlooks areas of southern Lebanon and northern Israel, is about 6 kilometers northwest of Marjayoun, the main town in Israel's self-styled "security zone" in southern Lebanon. Beaufort is some 4 kilometers from the Israeli border.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the incident.

Israeli ministry accuses PNA of violating Wye

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's foreign ministry on Tuesday outlined what it called numerous Palestinian violations of the Wye River agreement in a bid to deflect international criticism of the Jewish state's freeze of the accord.

In a memo intended for use by Israeli diplomats but released to the press, the ministry accused the Palestinians of failing to comply with the accord and reiterated Israel's insistence on certain conditions before handing over any further territory as called for in the agreement.

"The Palestinian side has not taken the necessary measures to outlaw all organisations of military, terrorist or violent character and their support structure," the memo said.

It said the Palestinian side had failed to "comply with its security work plan and to engage in full bilateral security cooperation."

The memo acknowledged Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's decree prohibiting incitement to violence but charged there had been "no implementation of the decree whatsoever."

The document added that the Palestinian intention to declare an independent state in May with Jerusalem as its capital was a unilateral action prohibited by the Wye agreement.

Other issues addressed in the ministry's guidelines were

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, greets Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Abdul Aziz Al Dakhil at the Royal Court on Tuesday (Photo by Yousef Al 'Aalan)



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, greets Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Abdul Aziz Al Dakhil at the Royal Court on Tuesday (Photo by Yousef Al 'Aalan)

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"We believe the clarity and frankness with which the Crown Prince conveyed in the speech was a position that we had to deal with positively as it is the number one issue in Kuwait," Dakhil told reporters after the meeting with Prince Hassan and senior Jordanian officials.

In the meeting with Dakhil, Prince Hassan said that "what we had done in Jordan was a translation of our firm conviction and belief in the need to safeguard and respect the dignity of Arab citizens." The Regent emphasized

the need for concentrating on the human dimension in resolving conflicts and respect for the Arab people's rights to a free and dignified life.

"We in Jordan have paid a heavy price for what happened in the region since the beginning of 1990s," the Crown Prince said. He called on Arab countries to understand Jordan's position and to remember that the Kingdom was on the forefront of defenders of the Arab Nation's causes and the Arab people's rights to live in security and stability.

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'Sudan warlord defects back to government'

NAIROBI (R) — A Sudanese rebel leader has defected to the government for a second time and is trying to revive his militia in a move that could threaten famine relief in southwestern Sudan, rebels said on Tuesday.

A senior rebel leader said Kerubino Kwanyen Bol had defected from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) just before Christmas and was preparing a return to his power base in the vast southwestern region of Bahr El Ghazal.

A Sudanese newspaper also reported on Monday that Kerubino was making overtures to the Khartoum government.

"Given his personality and unreliability it is no surprise that he is back with Khartoum," the rebel official, who declined to be named, told Reuters in Nairobi. "We understand that his mission is to get back to Bahr El Ghazal."

Kerubino was a founder of the SPLA but split in 1992

before making peace with Khartoum's Islamic government in 1997.

He rejoined the SPLA early last year, but months later fell out with rebel chief John Garang and was accused of ordering an attack on Garang's home in Nairobi, capital of Kenya.

Shifting allegiances among Sudan's warlords have complicated a 15-year civil war which pits the Islamic government in Khartoum against rebels who say they represent the mainly Christian or animist south.

Kerubino has his own militia in the north of Bahr El Ghazal and had always refused to bring it fully under the SPLA's command.

Ad workers say the militia's attacks on civilians directly contributed to a famine that killed thousands of people in the region last year.

They now fear Kerubino's latest change of allegiance could bring renewed instability to Bahr El Ghazal just as it

recovers from the famine.

The SPLA and Sudan's government agreed a ceasefire in Bahr El Ghazal last July but it is due to expire on January 15 and it is not clear if it will be renewed.

The United Nations' Operation Lifeline Sudan, which coordinates much of the aid work in Sudan, is pinning hopes for an improvement in the food situation in 1999 on a renewal of the ceasefire.

"Whatever stabilisation that has occurred in Bahr El Ghazal is dependent on the ceasefire and its extension," said Ted Chaitan, OLS deputy chief of operations for the southern sector.

He said Tom Vraalsen, the U.N. secretary general's special envoy for humanitarian affairs in Sudan, would travel to Khartoum on Thursday at the start of a tour aimed at negotiating an extension of the ceasefire.

The famine was caused by years of fighting which disrupted agricultural production and exacerbated a drought.

'Up to Turkey to get ready for EU'

BONN (R) — Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer on Tuesday reaffirmed German backing for Turkey's bid to join the European Union, but added that to secure entry it must fully respect democracy and human rights.

"For me, Turkey is a candidate," Fischer told a news briefing, departing from the position of former Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government, which was defeated in a general election last September. "But Turkey has domestic problems which it must resolve," he added.

Fischer said that Turkey would also have to clear tensions with Greece over the divided island of Cyprus before it stood a chance of winning unanimous acceptance to join the EU.

Fischer added that Bonn's centre-left government wanted to improve ties with Turkey, more than two million of whose citizens live in Germany. But he said criticism of Germany by Turkish politicians was making his job harder.

"Some of the things which have been said have been pretty hard to take when we have spent hours in EU talks backing the interests of Turkey," he said.

Ties between Bonn and Ankara were strained after Bonn dropped its bid to extradite Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan from Italy.

Ocalan was arrested last year in Italy because Germany had issued an arrest warrant in his name. German prosecutors suspect Ocalan of ordering the killing of a dissident member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

But Bonn dropped its extradition bid, fearing that violence might break out between Turks and Kurds living in Germany.

Fischer said Ankara would have to abolish the death penalty if it was to have a chance of securing Ocalan's extradition from Italy. "It is a task for Turkey's constitutional structures to secure the preconditions," he said.

Egyptian officials con-



Iraqi women line-up as they wait for hours to buy chicken in Kadhimiya, main shopping center of Baghdad on Tuesday. Iraqi government distribute chicken or other necessary foods by monthly ration cards. The U.N.'s oil-for-food programme, launched in December 1996, allows Iraq to export limited quantities of oil to buy food, medicine and other necessities (AP photo)

Turkish army watches over government search

By Alastair Bell
Reuters

ANKARA — Turkey's fractious political leaders were entangled on Tuesday in efforts to forge a new government under the watchful eye of the ascendant military.

Turkey has been without an established government for 40 days but, familiar with such uncertainty, shows no signs of major disruption. Inflation has fallen to its lowest level for eight years and Ankara scored a major diplomatic victory over regional rival Cyprus last week.

Nevertheless, the staunchly secularist generals have stepped up warnings that the power vacuum could aid the main opposition Islamists in the run up to general elections in April.

Prime Minister-designate Yilmaz Erez vowed not to heed calls to abandon his faltering bid to set up Turkey's sixth government since 1995.

"I am not considering giving back the mandate," Anatolian news agency quoted him as saying.

His search for partners in a proposed broad-based coalition ran into trouble on Monday after comments by conservative rival Tansu Ciller.

"Ciller Trips Him Up," the daily newspaper Yeni Yuziyil said. "Ankara Turned Upside Down," said another paper.

Radikal.

Ciller, a former prime minister, voiced support for an alternative bid to form a minority government under leftist Bulent Ecevit, jeopardising Erez's predictions that he would announce the make-up of his cabinet by Wednesday.

Whatever the new government looks like, it will only be a stop-gap measure until the polls in three months' time.

The armed forces, self-proclaimed guardians of Turkey's secular order, are keeping a close eye on the political wrangling for signs of backsliding in the fight against Muslim religious activism.

The force commanders on Monday issued a pointed statement urging the factions not to draw them into the political fray.

"The public is well aware that such initiatives are useless efforts at a time when our nation is most in need of stability and is urgently in need of a government," the general staff said.

The communiqué, despite its disavowal of any army role in the current deliberations, appeared designed by the generals to make their presence felt.

The army has been willingly involved politics since it led a campaign to remove the Russian-made missiles if they were deployed.

NATO member Turkey had threatened to strike the Russian-made missiles if they were deployed.

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 15, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 35 per cent, Aqaba 37 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 03/09
Jerash 07/16
Um Qays 06/15
Madaba 03/13
Petra 02/15
Dead Sea 12/22

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 4744685
Dr. Issam Asmar 4890504
Dr. Mohammad Shupair 4652693
Dr. Nidal As'ad 4751672

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered

from office in mid-1997. A similar military warning last November has helped force the main Islamist Virtue Party to the margins of the government talks, despite being the main opposition party.

The Islamists narrowly won the last polls three years ago on the back of Turkey's economic woes and voter discontent at squabbling among secularist rivals. This time around, the economic outlook is slightly better.

Data released last weekend showed annual inflation at 54 per cent, the lowest since 1990.

Istanbul stocks were up 0.16 per cent on Tuesday morning after jumping more than six per cent on Monday in EU talks backing the interests of Turkey," he said.

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Egyptian officials con-

ferred that the meeting took place and said further meetings were planned with other Iraqi opposition groups. The officials spoke on condition their names not be used.

The Amman meeting marked the first time that Egypt has been in contact with the Iraqi president's opponents since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

It reflects a major shift in Cairo's policies toward Iraq and could be a sign that Egypt supports U.S. efforts to work with Iraqi opposition groups seeking to overthrow Saddam.

Last month, Mubarak blamed Saddam for provoking the U.S.-British air strikes against Iraq, saying Saddam was "the reason for all the problems" in Iraq.

American and British jets fired missiles and rockets at Iraq from Dec. 16-19 to punish Saddam for his failure to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors.

Egypt's parliament announced Monday it would investigate the alleged killing by the Baghdad government of more than 5,500 Egyptian migrant workers in 1998.

The allegation was the latest salvo in charges and counter charges flying between Iraq and Egypt since Mubarak's remarks on Dec. 28.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz on Tuesday accused Mubarak of "cooking up more manoeuvres and conspiracies and probably another aggression" against Iraq.

"But Iraq will stay lofty... and it will be supported by all the Arab masses," Aziz wrote in an commentary in the state-run Al Jumhuriya newspaper.

Musa wants information on deaths of Egyptians in Iraq

CAIRO (AFP) — Two members of the Egyptian parliament have asked the government to shed light on the mysterious deaths of nearly 5,600 Egyptians in Iraq shortly before the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, officials said Tuesday.

The MPs, from the ruling National Democratic Party and leftist opposition Tagammu party, called during Monday night's session for Prime Minister Kamal Al Ganzuri and Foreign Minister Amr Musa to submit a report to parliament on the killings, which the weekly Akhbar Al Yom revealed Saturday.

"The people want to know the truth and the government can no longer remain silent about this tragedy," Tagammu MP Badri Fraghali said.

Parliament tasked the Arab affairs committee with studying the MPs' request and making recommendations.

Akhbar Al Yom, quoting "a highly-placed source," said 5,596 Egyptians were slain by the Iraqi regime before the August 1990 invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

The newspaper called for the government to lodge a complaint at the United Nations against Iraq for crimes against humanity.

A number of bodies of Egyptian workers were sent home from Iraq months before the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, but the circumstances of their deaths remained murky, as did the exact number of the dead at the time.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192-4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic Police 4896390

Church of Presentation, Sweidani Tel. 5920146

The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mazayad Pharmacy 5537000

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 44-53200

IRBID:

Dr. Ali Shuaibai (02) 710069

Fou'ad Pharmacy (02) 275360

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Spe-

cial Surgery 5921199

The Islamic Abdi 56611317

Hussein Medical Centre 5856856

Luzmili 4630195

Khalidi Maternity 46428176

Akileh Maternity 46424412

Jahil Amman Maternity 4642326

Malhas, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine Shmeissani 5607071

Shmeissani Hospital 5607431

Jordan Hospital 5607550

University Hospital 5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279

Al-Ahli, Abdali 56641646

Italian, Al-Muhejzen 47710113

Al-Bashir 47751126

Army, Ma'ka 48916115

Queen Alia Hospital 5157100

Amal Hospital 5607155

Price Complaints 5661176

Water & Sewerage Comptn. 497467

Amman Municipality Com-

plaints 4787111

Telephone Information (direc-

tory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 0132

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 4773111

Radio Jordan 4774111

Christianity classes already on offer

AMMAN (J.T.) — A senior official Tuesday refused reports that a decision to offer Christian education had been postponed, and said the Education Ministry has already started offering classes in cooperation with an agreement reached last year with Jordan's Bishops Council, refuting media reports that the decision was postponed.

Minister of Education Director General Mahmoud Massad said that Christian students in public schools of the Salt, Irbid, Huson, Madaba and Mafraq have been receiving Christian education.

Jallouf of Terra Christi, the council's director of educational relations with the ministry, said Christians in government schools will be required to attend Christian education classes in their districts once a week.

Classes will last 45 minutes, said Jallouf, who noted that Christian education will be voluntary for all Christian students.

His plan is a trial and will be

introduced to all districts, including Amman, if it proves successful, added Jallouf.

The decision to include such education in government schools, which currently offer only Islamic education, was taken two years ago but implementation was delayed due to technicalities, he said.

Jallouf said the Christian curriculum is similar to the Syrian model since no appropriate texts are currently available. The books will be distributed free of charge.

The council has required a number of qualified Christian instructors to teach from the third to the secondary level, but the teachers will be paid by the ministry, according to Jallouf.

He said the council has provided the ministry with the names of the selected teachers and the schools at which classes will be held.

Jallouf expects a Jordanian syllabus to be ready in two years. A special committee has been created to prepare the programme.

PPD bans publication of information on case against Deputy Abbadi

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Press and Publications Tuesday circulated a memorandum to the local press banning the publication of "information or news" connected with or relevant to Parliament Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi.

The department's director general Iyad Qattan said in the memorandum to the press "all information or news related to Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi will not be published and violators will be prosecuted under article 39 of the Press and Publications Law number eight of 1998."

The department acted in response to instructions from the prosecutor general of the criminal court who asked that the ban be observed by all newspapers.

Gas trucks' 'ugly' honking becomes music to the ears as distributors dispatch cylinders after gas shortage

By Muhammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Jordanians who were inconvenienced by the recent gas crisis seem to be relieved to see vans carrying gas cylinders again roaming the capital's streets, honking their horns to alert citizens of their arrival in their neighbourhoods.

Others are less enthusiastic and believe the crisis could occur again at any time if scheduled gas shipments are delayed.

"The root solution to the gas problem in Jordan is to upgrade the production capacity of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company's station as well as increasing the storage capacity of gas stations across the Kingdom," said Mohammad Kaisi, chairman of the Jordan Gas Stations Owners Association.

He blamed the Jordan Refinery Company for the crisis which, according to the union, is not the first since 1994.

However, the Jordan Consumer Protection Society said yesterday that it appreciated the efforts of the refinery and the Ministry of Energy to overcome the problem.

"The ordered gas has arrived in the Kingdom and the Ministry of Energy is supervising the distribution of gas in all parts of the country. There is no need to worry. The crisis is over," Mohammad Obeidat, head of the National Society for Consumer Protection said in an interview with the state-run Jordan news agency, Petra.

But he warned of a possible subsequent shortage caused by citizens buying more than their actual need.

"People should rationalise buying gas and avoid stocking it in their houses," said Obeidat.

"The crisis has been over since last week, but people buy [gas cylinders] more than they need which has contributed to complicating the problem," Minister of Water, Irrigation and Supply Hani Mulki told the Jordan Times.

Abdul Wahab Zu'bi, general manager of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company, attributed the problem to an unexpected delay of a gas shipment from Greece.

"The air strikes against Iraq also delayed an over-due gas shipment from Baghdad," said Zu'bi.

Some columnists, however, lashed out at the refinery for laxity in dealing with the problem.

"The cut of gas supplies from Iraq to the Kingdom caused by the four nights of American-led air strikes against Iraq should not have led to the crisis," said Fakhri Qu'war, a columnist. The company did not take the usual precautionary measures to prevent such a crisis."

Another columnist ruled out the possibility that citizens have any role in complicating the problem.

"I find it strange that some people lay the blame on citizens for buying more than their need," said Ahmad Musleh. "It is only the government and the

rest would be crude oil."

New IMF programme expected to propose clampdown on tax evasion

AMMAN (J.T.) — The 1999-2001 economic restructuring programme to be adopted by the government in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is expected to include an amendment to the existing income tax law in order to stem rampant tax evasion, according to a report in the Al Aswaq daily Tuesday.

The report said that the Income Tax Department has been collecting an average of JD150 million annually in income tax out of an estimated Gross National Product estimated at JD5.5 billion. This means that at least 50 per cent of Jordanians evade their income tax payment.

The report said that the Jordanian government will this month open negotiations with the IMF to agree on terms for financing the new economic restructuring programme. An IMF delegation due in Amman soon will open talks with senior Jordanian officials about the new three-year agreement and to conduct an assessment of the former 10-year economic restructuring programme which ends Jan. 31.

The talks will also include a revision of terms and conditions which the IMF is

demanding that Jordan apply to qualify for loans and carry out the economic reform plan.

Judging from the preliminary discussions between the IMF and the Jordanian government, the new programme will aim to reduce the deficit in the country's annual fiscal budget gradually and to pursue the privatisation policy. The programme also calls for restructuring a number of sectors like water, agriculture, health, and higher education.

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The report said that amendments to laws and regulations involved in the new economic reform plan are to be made in response to IMF recommendations in a manner that would help Jordan adapt to developments in the Middle East.

itable as it was before due to the ever-increasing number of pharmacies in the Kingdom," said the pharmacist who did not wish to be named.

"There are around five pharmacies in my neighbourhood. How can I be expected to make money and pay my fees to the association?" he added.

Another pharmacist who works in a pharmaceuticals factory complained that his low pay does not allow him to "unnecessary expenses."

"Factories work us to the bone and they do not pay us well," said Iyad Azmi.

"We are always confronted with the same two options — take it or leave it."

According to the association's figures, there are 5,000 names on the membership list of the association.

The general assembly gave dues-dodgers — 26 per cent of the association's total members — a grace period lasting until Dec. 31, 1998, before striking their names from the membership roster.

Talal Albo, secretary general of the association blamed the previous general assemblies for the large number of dodgers, saying that the assemblies were lax and indecisive, allowing members not to pay yet still retain their membership.

But members wonder whether membership, and the financial obligations it entails, is a worthwhile investment of time and money.

"We get nothing from the association to help us or voice our concerns so why should we pay the fees," said one pharmacist who expects to be suspended.

"Besides, working in pharmacies is not as prof-

Pharmacists Association prepares to suspend 300 'due-dodging' members

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The General Assembly of the Jordan Pharmacists Association has decided to suspend the membership of 300 members for failing to pay their fees, said Abdul Rahim Issa, head of the association.

The names of the dismissed members will be published very soon in the public newspapers," said Issa.

The association last year repeatedly threatened to suspend the membership of 1,300 of its members in the West Bank and Jordan for failing to pay membership dues.

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Ministry to launch pilot project to rehabilitate school dropouts

By Suha Ma'ayah

AMMAN — The government plans to launch a pilot project next month to help rehabilitate some of Jordan's school dropouts, estimated to form two per cent of 985,000 pupils at 2,750 state-run schools, officials said Tuesday.

Mahmoud Massad, director general of education at the Education Ministry, said a weekly camp, to open at a state-run school in the poverty-stricken Wadih area, would be launched in other towns and cities later in the year.

A team of counsellors, teachers and psychologists will supervise 30 dropouts between the age of 12 and 16 years who will be allowed to attend the first project.

They will spend weekends at the camp for up to four years to undertake educational and rehabilitation programmes to primarily prevent them from turning into juvenile delinquents.

"These projects will help decrease illiteracy and also lessen tendencies of aggressive behaviour and vandalism caused by

spend several weekends in a specially-equipped camp at the school," Massad told the Jordan Times.

He will receive a comprehensive educational scheme that includes learning programmes for illiterates.

medical care, nutrition and other activities as well as psychological guidance in an attempt to rectify their negative behaviour.

— boost their morale and skills at work," he added.

The ministry plans to set up 30 similar camps later this year in other poor areas in eastern Amman as well as in Zarqa, Irbid, Madaba, Karak and Aqaba — areas whose income basically comes from tourism or industry.

"The idea is to gather dropouts who are currently working in different underpaid jobs and have them

help reduce the number.

Even though 91 per cent of children in Jordan attend schools between the ages of six and 16, thousands dropout because of poverty, broken families and disenchantment with the overall educational system.

The ministry's hands are tied as it spends millions of dinars from tight budget allocations and from foreign funding to modernise

curricula and improve the overall educational system.

The string of projects for the dropouts are estimated to cost JD8,000 a year.

But educators and sociologists believe the socio-economic benefits of such a scheme will be far greater.

Government officials say that 70 per cent of dropouts commit juvenile crimes and such a project could

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The Editor and Staff of

The Jordan Times

mourn the passing of

Saeeda Al Safadi,

grandmother

of their friend

and former colleague

Ayman Al Safadi

May her soul

rest in peace

what's going on

FILM

"Bear" at Books@Cafe, Jabal Amman on Thursday Jan. 7 at 10:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457)

EXHIBITIONS

- Photo exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Jan. 16.
- Exhibition of ceramics, sculpture, and abstract (plastic) art by Jordanian, Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, and Sudanese artists at Hamzourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5336098), until Jan. 25.
- Exhibition of Nabataean silver jewelry at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Saqra Street, until Jan. 15 (Tel. 5699141/2).
- "The Warm Winter" — works by several artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Uthaina (Tel. 5526932), until Feb. 1.
- The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabel Weibdeh (Tel. 4642512), until Jan. 28.

Two ethnic Albanians killed, OSCE inspects alleged mass grave

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Two ethnic Albanians were reported killed Tuesday as international monitors headed to inspect an alleged mass grave in Kosovo. Ethnic Albanian rebels, meanwhile, launched their own radio station and news agency.

The Kosovo Information Centre, close to separatist Kosovo Albanian leadership, said two ethnic Albanians who worked at a gasoline station in Vitina, some 40 kilometres southeast of Pristina, were gunned down last Monday.

The centre said the perpetrators and the motive of the killing were unknown. Bodies of more than a dozen ethnic Albanians and Serbs have recently been found in Kosovo in what appeared to be a series of gangland-style killings.

The latest shootings came as a team from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) headed for Urosevac in southern Kosovo to inspect ethnic Albanian rebel claims that 11 women and children were buried in a mass grave there after Serb troops killed them during an offensive against Kosovo separatists last year.

The OSCE, which runs the international monitoring mission in the province, said it hoped to determine whether the Kosovo Liberation Army claim of a mass grave merited a formal investigation by forensic experts.

Meanwhile, the KLA said it launched its radio and news agency based on the Kosovo territory controlled by the rebels. The radio, "Kosova e Lire" (Free Kosovo) reportedly had a one-hour broadcast Monday and the news agency, "Kosova Press," published its first item in the Kosova Sot daily Tuesday.

Kosova Sot quoted Jakup Krasniqi, a member of KLA's chief of staff, as saying that the two new media outlets "will inform domestic and international public about the just liberation fight of (Kosovo's) people and their army." More than 1,000 people have been killed and some 300,000 uprooted from their homes since Serbian authorities launched a crackdown last February against Kosovo Albanian rebels fighting for independence from Serbia, the larger of two republics left in Yugoslavia. Most of the victims have been ethnic Albanians.

A U.S.-brokered truce in October ended most of the fighting.

But the two sides are nowhere near a negotiated settlement on Kosovo's future status, and a U.S. State Department spokesman warned Monday that time for talks is fast running out.

"We think both sides need to understand that there is not much time left for a negotiated solution which can give the legitimate rights to the people of Kosovo and protect the national interests of the Serb province since 1993."

Tielens said the origin of the charges was unclear, and noted that his organisation has been working in the Serb province since 1993.

German government defends planned citizenship reforms

BERLIN (AP) — Pledging not to be deterred by opposition "slander," the government announced Tuesday it would counter a petition drive against its planned citizenship law reforms with an information campaign of its own.

"We're sticking with our intention and think that the law will be all ready by summer," said Cornelia Sonntag-Wolgast, parliamentary state secretary in the Interior Ministry.

She accused the conservative parties, which moved into the opposition with the September election of Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, of "slander" for suggesting that making it easier for foreigners to get German citizenship would lead to more violence and terrorism in Germany.

"There will be a majority (for the reform) among the public if we argue properly and don't indulge in a form of

scaremongering," she told southwest German broadcasters.

The government plans to relax Germany's nationality law, which is based on bloodline, not place of birth, to make it easier for foreigners to become Germans and still keep their original citizenship.

But many conservatives argue that the reforms would give special privileges to foreigners and could lead to potentially dangerous divided loyalties.

On German television Monday night, Christian Democratic Union chairman Wolfgang Schaeuble said dual citizenship would endanger the integration of foreigners in Germany, not promote it.

In addition, he said it would lead to considerably greater immigration.

But the federal government's commissioner for foreigner affairs, Marieluise

Beck, accused the Christian Democrats and their Bavarian allies, the Christian Social Union, of trying to incite the public against the reforms to raise their own profile.

She said the government would counter the petition drive, which the conservatives plan to launch Jan. 24, with an information campaign of its own.

Even some Christian Democrats criticised the petition drive Tuesday. Berlin's commissioner for foreigner affairs, Barbara John, warned against fighting a "party struggle on the backs of foreigners in Germany."

The chairman of the party's social policy committee, Rainer Eppelmann, told the Berliner Zeitung newspaper that a petition drive would only make sense if it leads to a broad and substantive debate. He added he hoped "that along with that emotions will be kept in check."

Romanian minister despairs over NATO entry

BUCHAREST (AP) — Romanian Defence Minister Victor Babuic lamented Tuesday that the country's prospects of joining NATO had been effectively "cancelled" by proposals to slash his budget this year.

He said the planned 1999 budget cuts, part of Bucharest's attempts to resolve its economic woes, mean Romania had no chance of being invited to join the Washington summit marking its 50th anniversary in April.

The draft budget completely blocks the process of modernising the army, compromises the operational capacity of our troops and makes any debate about preparations for NATO entry

pointless," he said.

The proposed defence budget represented 1.98 per cent of GDP, as against 2.23 per cent last year, he said, arguing that it "cancels our chances of being admitted to NATO."

Three former communist countries — Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic — are due to be formally admitted to NATO at the Washington summit marking its 50th anniversary in April.

Romania had no hope of being invited to join by April, Babuic said. "The only credible argument which could be used at the Washington summit was an increase, even a symbolic one, in military spending," he said.

Vedrine expressed "understanding" of Cambodia's position but reminded Hor Namhong of the need to see those who perpetrated the genocide brought to justice.

Bucharest, which is at the back of the queue for EU membership, is currently in negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on how to ease its economic problems to secure further IMF credit.

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Rep. Dennis Hastert (Republican from Illinois) speaks to reporters regarding the issue of President Clinton giving his State of the Union address as scheduled on Jan. 19. Hastert, the probable next speaker of the House, said he wanted to be as "hospitable to the president as possible" (Reuters photo)

Hastert says he'll work to restore faith in Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — Representative Dennis Hastert says his main goal when he is chosen speaker of the House is to end the political divisions that have held legislation hostage, and thereby restore the nation's faith in Congress.

"This Congress has to go to work, we have to start to produce good things that the American people want, policy that addresses the needs of the American people," the Illinois Republican said before a meeting with Republican leaders.

"That's our first and most important step in restoring faith in this U.S. House of Representatives."

Hastert takes over a House deeply divided by the impeachment of President Bill Clinton and paralysed by partisan clashes. He pledged to reach out to Democrats.

"I will be me and I'm not going to try to emulate Newt or anybody else," Hastert, the 57-year-old former high school teacher said when asked how he would differ from the outspoken Gingrich.

"We need to start our agenda now," he said. "We intend not to talk about those issues but deliver."

"One of the things that I want to do is to open the possibilities for this House to work together. We need to work together, especially on very substantive issues, on a bipartisan basis."

Hastert's surprise rise to the leadership spot followed Gingrich's decision to resign in the wake of Republican losses in the November elections and the announcement last month by Gingrich's expected successor, Rep. Bob Livingston of Louisiana, that he had had extramarital affairs and would not seek the speakership.

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Campaign for Khmer Rouge trial gathers pace

PHNOM PENH (AP) — The campaign to bring former Khmer Rouge leaders to justice gathered pace Tuesday as Cambodian officials said they wanted to see two notorious defectors stand trial for their role in the genocide of up to two million people.

"Cambodian authorities wished to see Khmer Rouge leaders Khoue Samphan and Nuon Chea brought to justice. Foreign Minister Hor Namhong was quoted as saying by a French foreign ministry spokesman in Paris.

The government was awaiting the assessment to be made by experts mandated by the United Nations, as well as other jurists, before deciding whether to try the two leaders who defected last month, the minister said.

Hor Namhong stated the Cambodian position at talks with his French counterpart Hubert Vedrine Monday, and the comments come as an apparent government bid to distance itself from the VIP reception given to the defectors.

He said Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen made Cambodia's position "abundantly clear" in a statement on Jan. 1.

Vedrine expressed "understanding" of Cambodia's position but reminded Hor Namhong of the need to see those who perpetrated the genocide brought to justice.

The United States has meanwhile stepped up its calls for a trial following a meeting here between Hun Sen and U.S. ambassador Ken Quinn Monday.

"We call upon the government of Cambodia to insist upon accountability for the crimes of the 1975 to 1979 period," said State

Department spokesman James Rubin.

The State Department has said it would prefer to see an international tribunal, created by the U.N. Security Council, hear charges against the Khmer Rouge leaders.

But U.S. officials did not rule out a trial in a Cambodian court.

"We are continuing to consult with the Cambodians and other interested parties on this," Rubin said.

However, China — the ultra-Maoist Khmer Rouge's biggest backer as they wreaked genocide on the country — asserted the question was an internal matter for Cambodia.

"As the leaders of the Khmer Rouge come back to the big family of Cambodia gradually, the issue of the Khmer Rouge has become history," foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said at a bi-weekly press briefing.

"As for how the leaders of the Khmer Rouge will be dealt with, this is in essence an internal matter of the Cambodian government and the people and should be decided by the Cambodian government and people independently," he said.

Nuon Chea and Khoue Samphan are now back in the former rebel stronghold of Pailin after completing their holiday tour of the country.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Yeltsin maintains low profile into 1999

MOSCOW (AP) — Virtually invisible as Russian president for much of 1998, Boris Yeltsin will maintain a low profile through the first week of 1999 working at a country retreat. Russian news agencies reported Tuesday Yeltsin, who was sidelined for months with ill health in 1998, will work on documents at his Russ residence outside Moscow Tuesday. Wednesday, agencies cited the Kremlin as saying, Yeltsin enters a long weekend to mark Orthodox Christmas, which falls Thursday with officials not due back at their desks until the following Monday. But the Russian president does have a busier schedule thereafter, with a trip to France pencilled in for Jan. 28 and 29, and a steady trickle of visitors to Moscow, including European Union leaders in February for an anti-Russia summit. Interfax reported Tuesday that the Kremlin chief is also planning a trip to Poland, but no date has been set. Yeltsin's health woes deepened last year with bouts of hepatitis, pneumonia and nervous exhaustion but in recent public appearances he has appeared fitter.

India must clearly spell out nuclear policy, says U.S. envoy

NEW DELHI (AP) — India must specify in "concrete terms" the number of missiles and warheads it needs to ensure its security or risk being viewed as a regional threat, U.S. Ambassador Richard Celeste said Tuesday. Celeste told the Press Trust of India that New Delhi, which staged nuclear tests in May, is facing a mounting riposte from arch-rival Pakistan, should India not be viewed as an "open-ended threat" by neighbours. "How many missile systems and warheads does India need to have a minimum nuclear deterrent," Celeste asked. "I think some expression of what India really wants and needs and strives to achieve in a reasonably specific time ... is important not only help the U.S. understand but also specific neighbours to understand ... so that there isn't an open-ended threat." The United States imposed sanctions on India after the tests, despite protests from Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that Washington and the rest of the international community refused to recognise India's legitimate security needs. Celeste said Indian assurances on a no-first use of nuclear weapons and a promise not to fuel an arms race were "encouraging but ... general statements." While post-test nuclear talks between New Delhi and Washington have made "substantial progress," Celeste said "substantial work" remained to be done. An eighth round of talks is scheduled for later this month.

Bangladeshi scientists claim anti-arsenic compound to clean water

DHAKA (AP) — Bangladeshi scientists have developed a low-cost chemical compound to purify water contaminated with arsenic, a major problem in this South Asian country, a report said Tuesday. The Ajker Kagjo daily said the powdered compound was prepared by mixing several salts with an iron component, and could purify one litre of water at a cost of 20 paise (0.4 cents). The scientists, from the state-run Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, included Atabuddin Ahmed, Tahrun Nigar, Ashish Kumar Sarker, Meher Nigar Chowdhury and Samiran Bhattacharya. A patent has been applied for the report said. Underground waters in large areas of Bangladesh have been contaminated by arsenic, putting at risk nearly 60 million people. Officials say 3,247 people have been poisoned so far. Excessive use of underground water is draining the water table and concentrating naturally occurring arsenic that filters from the soil. Levels of two parts per million have been recorded in some places. The chemical purifier was tested and displayed at a recent scientific exhibition in Dhaka.

Bitter cold settles in behind snow-laden storm in the U.S.

NEW YORK (AP) — A snowstorm left waist-high snow drifts in western New York, dumping up to 38 centimetres as it closed highways, businesses and airports Monday. Schools in the snow-savvy city were closed again Tuesday as forecasters predicted up to several more centimetres of snow. It was the latest blow in the Arctic blast that began over the weekend and has left much of the Midwest and New England under up to 60 centimetres of snow. It has also plunged the eastern two-thirds of the nation into a deep freeze. It was below -12 Celsius across much of the South early Tuesday — even normally balmy New Orleans dropped to -1 Celsius and school was cancelled as far south as Oklahoma. It was much worse to the north, where the wind chill on the northern Plains dipped to -51 Celsius. At least 60 deaths have been blamed on the weather, many of them from traffic accidents. Airports around the nation were still having trouble accommodating passengers, even in areas where the storm is long gone. Early Tuesday, stranded passengers at Detroit Metropolitan Airport received more bad news as Northwest Airlines cancelled more than 150 flights because it had trouble getting crews in. Thirty centimetres of snow were on the ground in Detroit. A Northwest spokesman in Minneapolis said the airline has cancelled more than 1,100 flights since Saturday.

No fairytale start as Britain's first prison storyteller comes under fire

LONDON (AP) — Britain's first official prison storyteller came under fire Tuesday as critics feared he would help teach inmates to concoct alibis, the daily *Guardian* reported. Poet John Rowe was appointed by the government to help prisoners at a low-security jail in Norfolk, eastern England, learn about "the structure of verbal narrative." The Home Office said his role was to help some of the 644 inmates create and tape bedtime stories to keep them in touch with their young children. He will work among prisoners with poor reading and writing skills. "It is hoped this will help prisoners maintain family relations and reduce reoffending," said a spokesman. But critics were well able to express their concerns. One local politician said: "I am speechless. I would have thought that most of the inmates in the prison were pretty good at telling tales already without having someone to teach them." A former policeman for the region suggested the scheme would help prisoners "concoct a better alibi next time."

Painter Jose Vela Zanetti dies

BURGOS, Spain (AP) — Spanish artist Jose Vela Zanetti, whose human rights mural decorates the United Nations headquarters in New York, died in hospital here aged 85, a spokesman for his art foundation said Tuesday. Vela Zanetti was hospitalised a week ago after a fall at his home here. He died late Monday. The artist was exiled in the Dominican Republic during the Spanish civil war. He also worked in Colombia, Mexico, the United States and Switzerland. He was chosen to paint the U.N. mural in 1952 after an international competition. The huge mural was restored in 1998. In Spain, he was best known for his country-side and religious paintings.



Driving into 2000 — Ford Motor Company Vice President Jim O'Connor (right) introduces two new Ford trucks, the Explorer Sport Trac (left) and the F-150 Crew Cab (right) on Jan. 4 during the press preview days of the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. The Explorer hybrid, which combines the cab section of the Explorer sport-utility with a hard-covered, lockable cargo bed behind it, goes on sale in 2000 as a 2001 model. The F-150, also slated for sale in 2000, has a slightly shorter cargo bed than other pickups but offers a full-sized, four-person, four-door cab (Reuters photo)

Indonesia may send combat troops back to Aceh

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia warned Tuesday that it might send combat troops back to Aceh following fresh separatist attacks in the rebellious province, where nearly 20 people have been killed in a week of violence.

"It may happen," State Secretary Akbar Tanjung said when asked about the possibility of putting the province on the island of Sumatra back under what is termed a "military operations status" which ended in August after nine years.

"It is true that for Aceh, we need to improve security... We also need to try to find out the roots of the problems," Tanjung told reporters. He gave no further details.

The military effectively ran the province for nine years, sending in combat troops to battle a growing insurgency.

In the process it was accused of widespread human rights abuse includ-

ing summary executions, rape and torture.

The military apologised for its past abuses in Aceh and said in August it was withdrawing all combat troops as it lifted the "military operations status" in the province.

Separatist movements have been simmering for years in the staunchly Muslim and resource-rich province.

The Acehnese accuse Jakarta of plundering the region's wealth, of doing little to provide locals with social welfare and of bringing in outsiders to do even low-skilled work.

The military said the town was back to normal Tuesday though a number of shops were closed.

Riot flared again in the restive province last week when a machete-wielding mob Tuesday stopped a public bus carrying off-duty soldiers near Lhokseumawe.

The military, which blames separatist rebels for

the attack, say eight of the soldiers were tortured and killed.

Indonesia also faces separatist insurrections in the remote eastern province of Irian Jaya and the former Portuguese colony of East Timor.

Separatist movements have been on the rise since the downfall in May of former President Suharto after 32 years of iron rule during which any attempts to break away from Jakarta were brutally crushed.

Indonesia has also been plagued by spiralling unrest and crime over the past year as a crippling economic crisis pushes millions into poverty amid persistent political instability.

President B.J. Habibie Tuesday repeated his warning that if Indonesians do not treat their new-found freedom responsibly then attempts to give the country a rare taste of democracy will flounder.

Scottish land reform plans anger landowners

EDINBURGH (AFP) — Britain's Labour government Tuesday unveiled plans to reform the 900-year-old feudal system of land ownership in Scotland, but faced fierce resistance from landowners.

The planned legislation will include new powers enabling the government to buy unmanaged estates through compulsory purchase in a move designed to deter absentee landlords.

Most of Scotland is owned by some 1,500 landowners, including from England and abroad. Many do not live on their properties, which can cover up to 320 square kilometres.

They include ex-Beatle Sir Paul McCartney, Sheikh Mohammed al-Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, and Harrods owner Mohammed al-Fayed, as well as wealthy

aristocrats who have owned the land for generations.

"There is a consensus across Scotland that legislation to break down centuries old barriers to land reform should be one of the first acts of the Scottish Parliament," said Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar.

The measures, which are to be submitted before the new semi-autonomous Scottish parliament due to be elected on May 1, prompted a hostile response from the Scottish Landowners' Federation (SLF).

SLF spokesman Andrew Dingwall-Fordyce said his members believed in self-regulation, and were prepared to go to the European Court of Justice to resist the new powers.

But the pro-independence Scottish National Party

(SNP) said it wanted even stricter intervention to boost tenants rights and deter absentee landlords.

SNP land spokesman Fergus Ewing said any reform must prevent the type of dispute seen on the island of Eigg, bought by its residents last year after a prolonged tussle with German artist Martin Maruma who purchased the island in 1995.

Ewing said reform had to be "sufficiently strong and democratic to deter bad landlords such as Mr Maruma from buying estates such as Eigg in the first place, rather than trying to pick up the pieces once the damage was done."

He said the SNP wanted local communities to have the right to intervene in cases of abuse, with the possibility of compulsory pur-

chase.

Some English landowners fear that if the SNP gains a majority in the new parliament, it would penalise them.

Memories are still raw in Scotland of the 18th century Highland Clearances, when many Scots were forced to abandon their small-holdings by English troops, with many emigrating to Canada or Australia.

The government's proposals would also allow communities in remote areas to apply for cash from the British national lottery to buy an estate if it comes on the market.

It would give tenant-farmers, known as crofters in Scotland, the right to buy their land at any time. Other plans include a "responsible right to roam" in the countryside.

S. Pole trekkers still blizzard bound in tent

AUCKLAND (AFP) — Three men trekking to the South Pole were Tuesday set to remain tent-bound for another few days as they continue to be battered by a blizzard.

The trio, led by New Zealander Peter Hillary, had planned to reach the South Pole on Christmas Day but weather conditions and illness mean they are now running more than three weeks behind.

The delays have strained fuel and food rations.

But Jon Muir, one of the three trekkers, said Tuesday the trio had sufficient supplies to get them to the South Pole where they are due to get fresh provisions.

"Although we have full

rations for about two weeks, we can stretch this out to a month quite easily.

"It's by no means a dangerous situation. We would just like it to be a bit more comfortable," he said. Muir, fellow Australian adventurer Eric Philips and Hillary, son of mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary, are retracing the ill-fated expedition of English explorer Robert Falcon Scott.

Scott and his team members died in 1912 from exhaustion, starvation and cold only a few kilometres from a food dump, and only days from journey's end after being delayed by blizzards.

But he said the trio was now in good health and spirits. "Despite our situation, blizzed in, inside the tent,

low on food and fuel ... our physical ... mental and emotional condition is fantastic.

"We're jovial, we're spirited. We're just cooling our heels waiting for the storm to blow over and then off we scoot across the plateau again," he said.

The team left Scott Base on Nov. 4 to ski-haul supply sleds to the South Pole.

Unlike Scott, who started out with dogs and ponies to haul sleds, the lunar-day trio are using extra-light technology, including special quadrifoil kites to speed their progress. They also carry satellite phones.

Their initial plan was to complete the round trip by the beginning of February.

Pakistani police arrest Sunni militants after slaughter of rival Shiites

MULTAN, Pakistan (AP)

— Thousands of mourners hurrying the victims of a massacre at a Shiite Muslim mosque beat their chest, wailed and cried out Tuesday for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's removal from power and an army takeover.

"Murderer... murderer," they cried during the funeral services for 11 of the 16 Shiite Muslim worshippers who were slain Monday.

The dead were buried in the same Qureshi More mosque where the vicious attack had occurred, some 30 kilometres from Multan. The other five victims were buried separately in their home villages located nearby.

"The army should come now to bring peace in the country," said Tariq Shah, leader of the militant Shiite Muslim group, Tehrik-e-Jaffria.

"Never before have we felt so unsafe. Nawaz Sharif's government has failed to protect us," said Shah.

Other Shiite Muslim leaders said if the army is not ready to take over then it should at least force the dismissal of the Punjab provincial government.

The bloodbath between

rival Islamic sects has

shouted their agreement.

Police are blaming the attack at the mosque on Sunni Muslim militants belonging to the radical Sipah-e-Sabah Pakistan (SSP) or Guardians of the Friends of the Prophet.

Police conducted overnight raids on their offices and arrested 46 Sunni Muslim activists.

Police and paramilitary soldiers were deployed by the hundreds throughout the province to prevent violent clashes between militants of SSP and the Shiite Tehrik-e-Jaffria.

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The bloodbath between

rival Islamic sects has

increased in recent months, most of it in eastern Punjab province, the political heartland of Pakistan where 60 per cent of the population lives.

Most

Pakistanis

are Sunni Muslims who have no quarrel with their Shiite Muslim brethren. The fight has been between a small group of heavily armed militants belonging to both sects.

Hundreds of people have died in religiously motivated violence and some Shiite leaders warned that they would resort to defending themselves, which would further escalate the violence.

The

youngest victim of

Monday's massacre was a 12-year-old boy.

"I

sent my son to the mosque to pray and he was brought home to me dead,"

said his mother Razia Bibi, who wrapped herself in a shawl shaking and crying.

"The killers are roaming

free. The government is

doing nothing to stop handful of extremists responsible for sectarian violence," said Allama Sajid Naqvi, a leader of Tehrik-e-Jaffria.

"It is the responsibility of the government to protect people. Why the government is not coming down heavy on these extremists?" he asked.

Police say they have sought help from a British anti-terrorism team which is to assist the authorities in combating terrorism.

Hundreds of people die each year in Pakistan in religious and ethnic related violence.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who escaped an assassination attempt on Sunday outside the Punjab provincial capital of Lahore vowed to end terrorism.

"I am deeply shocked over this tragic incident... The police has been ordered to arrest the culprits within 24 hours," Sharif was quoted as saying.

Police responsible for Anwar's injuries, authorities admit

KUALA LUMPUR (AP)

— Malaysian police inflicted the injuries on former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim that drew international condemnation after his detention, the authorities admitted Tuesday.

A statement by Attorney-General Mohamad Abdulah was released as Anwar's corruption trial was told that semen stains on a mattress being used in evidence against him could have been planted.

Mohamad said there were some contradictions between the forensic report and the other medical reports and he had ordered police to take statements from the doctors involved.

The injuries put the international spotlight on Anwar's case and his accusations of corruption and abuse of power against the administration of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Mahathir said he sacked his former protégé because he was unfit to rule. Anwar now faces several charges of sexual misconduct and corruption which he has denied.

Mohamad said medical reports showed there were some injuries sustained by Anwar even before he was arrested.

Anwar further investigation has been fully carried out, if there is prima facie evidence, I as public prosecutor will not hesitate to consent to the institution of prosecution against any individual proved to have committed or

abused the commission of such offence."

Mohamad said the medical reports submitted to Mohamad were prepared by doctors from two hospitals, including one from forensic experts and one eye specialist.

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Mohamad said he had found semen stains on a mattress being used in evidence against him could have been planted. He said the mattress was kept for nearly four months after being seized before it was sent for tests.

He could not tell if the 13 stains tested for DNA were those he saw when the mattress was taken in July.

"I did not investigate if anyone had planted those things on the mattress," Mohamad Rodwan said under cross-examination. "I

did not take any photo of the mattress because I didn't think it was necessary."

The stains he saw "could have been other stains" and he could not tell if they were "coffee stains" or "rat droppings."

Asked if semen could have been taken from Anwar and planted on the mattress, Mohamad Rodwan said: "Yes. In my investigation, I did not eliminate this possibility."

The court heard last week that DNA tests on stains on the mattress matched those of Anwar and Shamsidar Taharin, the wife of his then private secretary with whom he was alleged to have had an affair.

The court had heard that blood was taken from the former deputy premier on Sept. 28, and later tested for DNA without his consent.

Mohamad Rodwan said he saw Anwar's eye was swollen on Sept. 28, and there was a brief outburst from Anwar's relatives in court when the judge prevented further questioning on that line.

The trial resumes Wednesday.

Malaysian politician, wife detained briefly for squatters protest

KUALA LUMPUR (AP)

— A Malaysian opposition leader, Syed Husin Ali, and his wife were detained briefly Tuesday, along with seven others, following protests over the demolition of squatter areas.

Syed Husin, who heads the tiny Malaysian People's Party, told AFP they were detained after he visited the squatter area in Ampang on the outskirts of the capital.

The opposition leader said he, his wife and four others were released after three hours in detention.

"Now the police are saying they did not arrest nine, only six, but we were all in the same police van, in the same lock-up," he said. "We are still waiting for news of the other three."

Syed Husin said he earlier visited the area to check on the families whose homes were demolished by a developer on Dec. 30.

Only 19 out of the 56 households received notices of eviction, but 28 houses had been demolished, he added.

The party said in a statement it "regrets that the developer has not acted humanely and have not heeded the advice of the Selangor Sultan to stop and reexamine

Zimbabwe's Mugabe hits back at Britain over criticism

HARARE (AP)

— Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe has hit back at Britain after receiving a cold reception during a recent visit to London, where some newspapers described him as a tyrant and suggested he should be arrested for human rights abuses.

Mugabe was quoted by government-controlled media Tuesday as saying that the British were at the forefront of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe during a century of colonialism — when

Jordan Times

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Resuming brotherly ties

THE VISIT of Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Dakhil to Amman and the talks he held with HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and other senior officials usher in a new era in Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations after eight years of strained ties in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990. Over the past few years, the relations between the two Arab countries started mending on several fronts. The resumption of Kuwait Airways flights to Amman in July of 1997 signalled the beginning of the process of building of new relations based on goodwill, respect and appreciation.

Ever since the disastrous Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, His Majesty King Hussein, Prince Hassan and other Jordanian officials went into great pains to explain the Kingdom's true intentions and policy towards Kuwait and the Gulf region. It is a good omen that the Kuwaiti leadership has decided to respond to Jordan's repeated overtures for full reconciliation and better understanding. Following an invitation to Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Al Khatib to visit Kuwait, the visit of the Kuwaiti minister to Amman crowns a series of steps undertaken by both sides to start a new page of brotherly relations.

The fruits of these better relations should be bountiful. The first thing that the two should embark on is the examination of the file of Jordanian expatriates who worked in Kuwait for decades and contributed a great deal to its development before their expulsion in the wake of the Gulf crisis. There is now a new hope that these workers, merchants and businessmen would be able to renew their bonds with their Kuwaiti brethren. Trade and commerce between Kuwait and Jordan can also be expected to resume and flourish in order to reach new levels. Jordan can also be an open market for Kuwaiti products of all kinds. Part of our energy needs could be imported from Kuwait. Above all, the leaderships of the two countries could contribute to healing Arab wounds and ending Arab crises.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarweh said the proposed Arab foreign ministers summit will not end the Arab Nation's "grief." The last Arab meeting took several decisions regarding the peace process and Palestine. Masarweh said, but nothing changed; the Palestinians are still suffering and the international community is still ignoring Arab pleas. What good will such a meeting do for Iraq, the writer asked. The Arab summit now forms more of an "embarrassment" as Arab regimes, incapable of protecting Palestine, Iraq, Libya and Sudan, are required to reclaim their rights from the U.S. According to Masarweh, some Arab League sources have said there is also danger inherent in holding the conference due to "sharp differences between Arabs." However, claimed the writer, postponing the event until Jan. 24 gives the U.S. the chance to strike Iraq again.

Al Dustour's Mazen Saket said it is obvious that there is unanimous agreement that Jordan is currently facing an economic depression in all sectors. However, it is dangerous and strange that such unanimity coincides with official statements denying that there are immediate solutions to the problem. Although the economic crisis is a result of regional and international turbulence, surrendering to the problem will only result in negative effects. A courageous review of all financial policies and economic approaches is a must in order to confront and manage one of the most important issues facing the country, concluded Saket.

Angola: The curse of Savimbi

By Gwynne Dyer

ON SATURDAY, for the second time in a week, they shot down a United Nations plane soon after take-off from the besieged Angolan city of Huambo. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan was "outraged", and Issa Diallo, head of the U.N. Observer Mission in Angola, said he thought U.N. flights were being specifically targeted. Six other flights out of Huambo that day were not fired on, but "the U.N. plane asked for and got authorisation, takes off, and gets shot down." Yet nobody said the obvious: "Savimbi did it." Both planes were shot down over territory controlled by UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), Jonas Savimbi's rebel army, and Savimbi has always treated the U.N. with contempt. But the U.N. never calls a spade a spade in Angola — with results that have been disastrous for the country.

Savimbi is a monster from a distant past, when Angola was still a Portuguese colony and the major liberation movement there was the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), which was both Marxist and non-racial. Lisbon saw the MPLA as especially dangerous because it drew support from all the tribes of Angola, from the large mixed-race population, and even from

some whites. So in the late 60s the ambitious and well-educated young Jonas Savimbi (he has a medical degree from Lisbon and a PhD from Lausanne) was recruited by the Portuguese secret police to start up a rival movement based on his own Ovimbundu tribe: UNITA. The goal was to weaken the MPLA by splitting off the Ovimbundu, who account for about a third of Angola's people. It has worked all too well. A revolution bome forced Portugal to pull out of Angola in 1975, but the MPLA and UNITA could not agree to form a government together. More precisely, the Cold War strategists who saw Africa as a battleground enticed them into war by promising them enough arms to crush the other side and form a government alone.

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the apartheid regime in South Africa gave Savimbi arms and money, and a joint South African-Unita offensive got most of the way to the capital, Luanda, in 1976. But the Soviets sent 50,000 Cuban troops to drive them back, and the struggle subsided into a 15-year-long guerrilla war. It was a debilitating conflict that killed several hundred thousand Angolans, but UNITA, kept afloat by U.S. and South African subsidies, had no chance of winning. The MPLA was the legal government, and controlled most of Angola's rich resources — it is

Africa's second-largest oil producer and third-largest diamond exporter — as well as most of the territory.

Despite the war, the MPLA even managed to build one of Africa's best medical, educational and welfare systems in most of the country (though there was no nonsense about democracy). UNITA used Maoist methods — Savimbi was a Communist at university, though he later changed ideology to suit his backers — to create an Orwellian tyranny in the region he controlled, but there was almost no development in his zone.

Then the end of the Cold War in 1989, followed by the end of white minority rule in South Africa, pulled the carpet out from under both Angolan combatants. Dealing over their heads, the Americans, Russians, and South Africans cut a deal that sent the MPLA's Cuban troops home, gave independence to South African-ruled Namibia — and forced Angola to hold a U.N.-supervised election.

It was a shambles. The government's army melted away after the cease-fire, but Savimbi filled the U.N.'s demobilisation camps with old men and boys while keeping his real army intact. The U.N. tolerated his foot-dragging, arguing that it could all be sorted out after the election — but then, to Savimbi's vast surprise and

utter fury, he lost the September 1992 election. Practically nobody outside the Ovimbundu-dominated Central Highlands voted for UNITA (and even many of them were coerced into it).

Savimbi claimed that the results were rigged (the U.N. said otherwise), and UNITA's secret army overran two-thirds of the country before the MPLA could rebuild its forces. Most cities in the interior were wrecked, all the infrastructure built up over 15 years was lost, the death toll rose to half a million (in a population of only 12 million), and Savimbi captured the diamond-producing provinces that largely finance his operations today. The U.N. stood idly by until an MPLA counter-offensive began to win back much of the lost territory in 1994, and then brokered a new cease-fire that gave UNITA a big share in a coalition government (with no nonsense about elections this time). Savimbi agreed, and over 8,000 U.N. troops were sent to supervise the disarmament process — but once again, Savimbi kept his best troops back.

The Luanda government knew what Savimbi was up to when the cease-fire violations and local land-grabs started mounting early this year, but it's no longer the poor-but-honest Marxist regime of the 70s and 80s. The Marxism is gone, but so is the honesty and dedication: the MPLA regime is

now one of the most corrupt and least competent in Africa. So its desperate recent efforts to rebuild its army have not produced a professional fighting force — as it discovered when large-scale fighting began again last month.

The U.N. knew that Savimbi had preserved the core of his army, but last year it withdrew its peace-keeping troops anyway, leaving only a thousand observers behind. The Security Council issued a strong statement blaming the vast majority of cease-fire violations on Savimbi, but did nothing except to impose a (very leaky) embargo on his vastly lucrative diamond-smuggling operations.

Now the cease-fire is over in all but name, and Savimbi turns out to have bought far more heavy weapons than anyone suspected. UNITA again threatens to overrun most of central Angola — and it's the only side with a motive for killing U.N. military observers who could confirm its violations. But the U.N. still obsessively pursues its policy of "even-handedness", refusing to acknowledge what is plain to everyone on the ground — and Angola goes back to hell.

The writer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. Dr. James Zogby will return next week.

LETTERS

What rot!

To the editor:

I AM WRITING in protest to the article "CIA aiding Indian missionaries to spread Christianity", (J1 Jan. 4th).

The title sounds like headline facts but when the article is read closely, you find that it is only an opinion piece. Even the financial figure given is no more than a stab in the dark.

Fact 1: The church was healthy and over 400 years old in India when Mohammed was born, having been started by the Apostle Thomas. It was a thriving 1300 years old when Columbus sailed to America, so why should the CIA be blamed for its existence in India?

Fact 2: The CIA/current American Government would prefer the whole world to be secular, not religious. They have no reason to put money into religious propaganda.

We do appreciate having a local English language paper, but buying a paper implies trust that some truth is being printed. This article broke that trust.

K. Hain
Amman

My enemy's enemy...

To the editor:

THOUGH STILL deeply affected by the air strikes launched against Iraq some two weeks ago, I feel it is time to take a look at the long-term alternatives for the international community vis-a-vis Iraq.

My point is: What language does someone like Saddam Hussein understand, who, on the one hand condemns the killing of Iraqi civilians during an air strike (that he was very much responsible for due to his diplomatic brinkmanship) and on the other is directly responsible for the killing of thousands of Kurdish civilians in the late 1980s?

It can be argued whether this is a fair comparison or not, but my point is that true criticism of his doubtful political practices in the Arab world is rare to find these days.

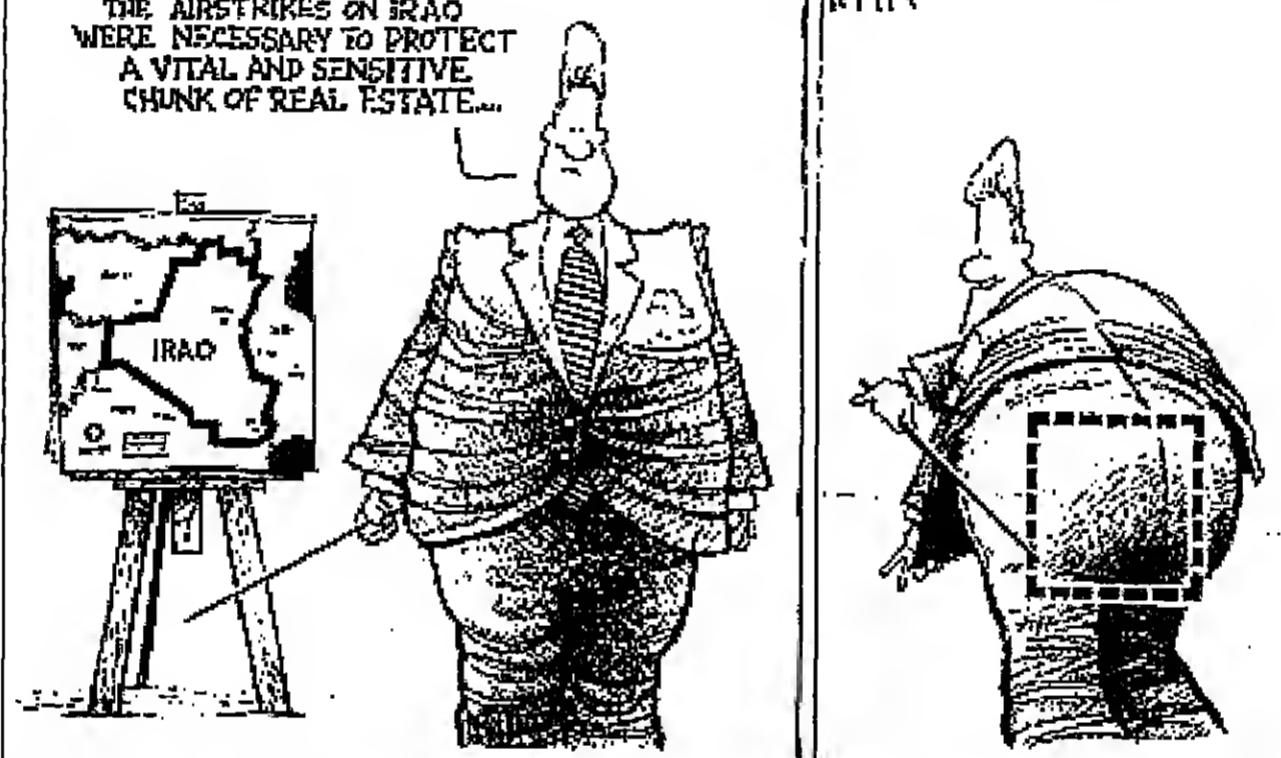
And further: How can someone who used chemical weapons against his own people be trusted? Does that come from a kind of misguided alliance or some odd sense of Arab solidarity?

I am carefully following up on the news, yet I have to date not found anybody commenting on the quality of his leadership with regard to outstanding domestic issues in Iraq, as opposed to the hundreds of articles touching on the (il)legitimacy of joint American-British military action.

Another question: Does the reason for the mild reaction by Arab governments to the strikes and the postponement of an joint Arab summit lie in the fact that not only have Arab states' (international) alliances shifted during the years following the Second Gulf war (or more likely after the rise of the Iron Curtain), but perhaps their overriding concern is maintaining stability in the region, which does not seem possible with Saddam Hussein in power?

I am not here to defend any U.S./British military actions against Iraqi civilians — I sharply condemn them. But I still think it is worth taking into consideration that the number of critics of the regime and opponents detained and killed in Iraqi prisons presumably exceeds the number of those who tragically lost their lives in the three day air strike against Iraq.

Denis Engelander
Post-graduate in political and Islamic studies
Friedrich-Schiller University Germany
(currently at Mu'tah University/Civil wing, Karak)



Way back when men were men

By Julie Burchill

LAST YEAR, on Mother's Day, Tommy Lee sent Pamela Anderson, his estranged wife and mother of his two boys, a card. Inside he wrote: 'It must have been hard looking after the three of us.' This was also the year in which Richard Gere claimed the appeal of his ex-wife, the shatteringly sexy Cindy Crawford, had been mostly 'maternal' and that they had not had sex on their wedding night.

And who will forget Will Carling, explaining that part of the reason he had walked out on his girlfriend — the intriguingly named Ali Cockayne — and their baby was because he looked at the boy getting lots of attention from his mother and thought: 'Hrm, I'd like some of that before starting an affair?'

Suddenly, last year's most grotesque Jerry Springer Show, The Adult Babies, made total sense. The Man With The Child In His Eyes has become The Man With The Crap In His Nappy. That is, an untoward proportion of men seem totally incapable of growing up. Leading to a massive epidemic of Women With A Pain In The Neck.

Don't get me wrong: I've got nothing against youth. Give me a boy who can do it five times a night between bouts with Lara Croft and I just don't care that he thinks Tiffany's is a transport cafe and Vendi a type of green pasta. But if I want youth, I'll have youth: perfectly smooth, no stretch marks on the mind or body, eyes not bloodshot from too many bullshots. If I want immaturity, I'll choose a gorgeous boy with no ambition and a sweet nature. But what, it seems to me, most women of my generation are getting is the worst of both worlds: the tragic, thwarted, spreading body of the middle-aged man housing the spirit and soul of the surly, sulky, pre-teen brat.

Like most fatal personality traits, it probably starts in the nursery. While boys are encouraged to be 'real boys', i.e. thick, running around causing havoc, girls are being praised for being 'little mothers' by the time they can toddle. Little toy kitchens, little toy feather dusters and, worst of all, little toy babies who cry prettily and piss eau de cologne. What seeds does it plant in a young, impressionable female mind, to be yearning for 'My First Baby' from the age of three?

Whatever the reason, we are told that girls 'mature' quicker than boys. True, this

is often an excuse used by geriatric men who have been screwing female children, e.g. Bill Wyman and Mandy Smith. But this miraculous maturation would seem to cover a multitude of male sins.

By the time he reaches his twenties, a young man has heard the Woman Manne, Man Immature mantra so often, it strikes him as the height of logic that, when he finally gets around to cohabiting with a woman not his mother, he can continue dropping his dirty clothes on the floor, burping blithely and having to be nagged into changing his socks. And two little words will get him home free: 'Sorry, Mum!' Far from standing up for old ideas of masculinity against the monstrous regimens of feminism, Laddism was a pleasure-crazed capitulation to the sensual pleasures of infantilism.

It celebrated big nourishing breasts, incontinence and fellatio, which historically was a method nursemades used to quiet crying baby boys.

Even the most envied of couples, the rich and famous, cannot avoid the fact that Boy Meets Girl appears to have mutated into Madonna Meets Child. Flick through any gossip magazine and count the starchy constituents of the Hall of Fame's Mother and Toddler Group: Michael and Cheryl Barrymore. Sean and Robin Penn (he made her cry on live TV when he gave his answer as: 'Two hookers and an eighth of cocaine' on being asked his idea of heaven), Nick and Gill Faldo and his blonde playmates.

Or they may just bugger off, hissy with sibling envy, when the patter of tiny feet other than their own turns up — see Carling and Daniel Day-Lewis. According to those who have seen Posh Spice and David Beckham together, he is extraordinarily dependent on her, whispering in her ear like the shyest child in the playgroup while she translates his thoughts.

But better the bashful Beckham than the bully boy rap stars, in whom infantilism takes a vicious turn. Whether raping the girls and making them cry, or blaming black women for the bad prospects of black men while worshipping capitalism, rap represents the ugliest aspect of all the male inability to grow up.

The trouble is, men have got it too soft these days. In the past, just the process of being alive saw to it that boys grew up

riage, adulthood seemed both the natural and desirable state for any boy on the right side of adolescence. These days, educated until they say 'when', with sex on tap, there simply seems no point in growing

They don't make them like they used to, that's for sure

up. Add to this the appalling role models that came about with the advent of youth culture, from James Dean to Liam Gallagher, and what you have is a recipe for permanent Peter Panhood. Sometimes they want to stop: James Dean died at 24 and the incongruity of dressing like him at 42 eventually this home to even the most grotesque self-adoring, grey-haired, blue-jeaned 'boy'. But the Peter Pan years keep creeping up, as Mick Jagger proves — he'll be chasing girls young enough to be his night nurse when he's using a Zimmer. Simon Nye has decided against writing another series of Men Behaving Badly because, he says: 'It may be fun to watch men in their thirties being buffoons, but as their forties approach the spectacle becomes a bit unsavoury.' But it's too late to stop now.

They don't make them like they used to, that's for sure. My dad took five years to die from asbestos poisoning, during which time he never uttered a word of complaint. At his death, he requested that there be no flowers, no ashes, no headstone and no death notice in the local paper (we disobeyed the last one). He left no disease diaries or special discounts for Christmas at Waterstone's and no yellowing newspaper columns celebrating hypochondria. He left us no bad, or even vaguely embarrassing, memories. He left no sign that he was here at all. Nothing, that is, except a giant shadow which will fall forever across all the men I have ever and will ever know, making puking, mewling moral pygmies of them all. This, then, was truly a Man.

— The Guardian

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address, as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Who wants to spend their life in a theme park?

By John Hannigan

These are 'fantasy cities' — tourism, entertainment and shopping all bundled together in a themed environment

If ALL goes according to plan, sometime early in the next century a consortium of companies, led by Canada's Reichmann family (late of the Canadian Wheat project in London's East End), will open the doors to "Destination Technodome." The \$450 million indoor entertainment and sports complex will be built on the site of a former air-force base on the northern edge of Toronto. The facilities will include a year-round, 10-million-ski hill, a white-water rafting course, mountain-climbing walls, a Hollywood-inspired theme park and a 30-screen multiplex cinema. And that is in addition to a fabricated tropical rain-forest and a replica of Bourbon Street in New Orleans.

Destination Technodome is one of a new breed of entertainment centres intended to anchor the "fantasy cities" of the future, where tourism, entertainment and retail development are to be bundled together in a "themed" environment. Multi-million-dollar theme complexes are now being planned in Brussels, Barcelona, and Germany. In Florida, Disney has gone one step further and recreated an entire village designed, managed and protected by Disney, never to feel the threat of crime or a speck of dust. The projects in Britain are much smaller in scale, so far, but at least three British companies — Rank, Virgin and Tussauds — are involved internationally. With the troubles in Asia, American corporations are now expected to turn their attention even more to Europe.

These urban projects are being marketed as the savours of declining downtown cores and stagnant suburban shopping centres. In places where the infrastructure is present and the demand is there, such as Florida and Las Vegas, they may be commercially successful. Elsewhere, as in Flint, Michigan, they have failed financially and dragged much-needed investment into non-productive dreams.

Critics, such as the U.S. writer Paul Goldberger, argue that this new urbanism of leisure will further encourage the privatisation of public places and the erosion of neighbourhood identities. Goldberger labels developments such as Destination Technodome "urbanoid environments." Like the pod-bred clones in the science fiction movie, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, they seem to be generic, but something is not quite right.

What is missing is a sense of the serendipity, diversity and humanity of traditional street life.

The template for these quasi-cities is the Walt Disney version of the theme park, which has forever changed our image of what urban life should be. To appeal to its mainly white, middle-class suburban market, Disney crafted a simulated vision of the world which was both idealised and stripped bare of any significant risk, conflict or controversy.

Whether in California, Tokyo or Florida, Disneyland visitors need not worry about tripping over garbage, being accused by panhandlers and "squeezee kids," or being mugged in the middle of the day.

Instead, city life means sampling "old

style" fudge or listening to a brass band in the town square.

Similarly, exotic foreign locales are rendered accessible and safe: no language or currency problems, stomach upsets or political instability. This "sanitised razzmatazz," as the New York Times architecture writer, Herbert Muschamp, calls it, can easily triumph over the real thing. Each year, during the March school break, several families from my wife's home town in rural Canada faithfully make a pilgrimage to the Disney resorts in Florida. After returning last winter, one of the dads observed (without irony): "I don't need to go to the South Pacific any more. I've already seen Tahiti at the Polynesian Village."

In adapting the Disney blueprint to the contemporary "theme park city," architects, developers and planners have borrowed and refined two key Disney strategies. To package the new entertainment destinations, they have embraced an architectural style which is designed to create an aura of fantasy, delight and well-being among onlookers.

Whereas shopfronts along traditional high streets are often diverse, and compete with one another visually, the retail establishments in fantasy cities are uniform and harmonious, suggesting consensus and contentment. But reassuring as it may be, Disney-inspired architecture is also blatantly commercial — a fusion of consumerism, entertainment and popular culture.

At "The Showcase Mall" in Las Vegas — a non-gambling entertainment complex on the famous "Strip" — the "World of Coca-Cola" is fronted by the world's biggest Coke bottles, 100 feet high. Engineered to capitalise on the worldwide recognition of its brand name, the World of Coca-Cola contains a series of interactive exhibits which cele-

brate Coke bottles, jingles and memories, as well as a retail store which sells Coke-themed products. Urban culture here translates into the "Coca-Cola Salute to Folk Art," which displays the work of artists from 14 nations who have designed oversized Coke-bottle sculptures using an array of styles. Inside, the architectural highlight is the "Fantastic Fountain," featuring 866 Coke bottles which uncork a

laser-like flow during a choreographed sound-and-light show.

Another significant component of the Disney model is its elaborate but largely invisible surveillance and control system. Thomas Vonier, an architect who has consulted widely with the U.S. State Department on security matters, cites the Disney theme parks as one of the best contemporary examples

of what he terms "large-scale urban control zones." At Disney World in Florida, visitors' movements are discreetly but firmly directed by a combination of recorded voices, robots in human form and employees. To ensure that guests are directed away from or towards specific locations, Disney uses a combination of technology (monorails and other transportation systems) and physical barriers such as pools, fountains and flower gardens. An action as innocent as taking off your shoes will bring an instant intervention and reprimand. Efficient as it may be, this control system also acts to ensure that guests exclusively follow an itinerary laid out by the park's designers.

Fantasy cities have adopted this same "Panopticon" model. In designing Boston's Faneuil Hall, the prototypical "festival marketplace," developer James Rouse sent his project manager straight to Disney World to learn the most effective methods of maintenance and securi-

ty. At the World Edmonton Mall, the first shopping centre in the world to devote a major portion of its space to entertainment, security guards sit behind a glass wall in Central Dispatch, monitoring banks of closed-circuit televisions and computers which reach into every corner of the mall.

In Manhattan, the Disney company has led a drive to sanitise Times Square, for-

merly one of

America's

stalest

prompts.

Now, uni-

formed,

radio-

equipped

public-safety

officers

employed by

the Times

Square Busi-

ness

Improvement

District make

twice-daily

visits to the

45 locations

of a computerised

watch

system to

check citizen

repons

of public

misbe-

haviour. The

same no-nonsense

approach is

spreading to

other areas of

public life.

In Los Angeles, transit

authorities have introduced "bum-proof"

benches which make sleeping impossible.

And, as I found out first-hand in a

library in Toronto's entertainment

district, even a brief attempt at napping can

earn a threat of ejection from the building's

security staff.

The "disneyfication" of our cities

reflects a larger societal trend towards

the "commercialisation"

and "passportisa-

tion" of experience. Today, people buy

and collect "leisure experiences" the

same way they do consumer goods. And like the purchase of Ralph Lauren

sweaters or Gaggia espresso machines,

our choices are designed to increase our

holdings of "cultural capital" —

resources which can be used to give us

an advantage in our dealings with others.

"Been there, done that" has become

the slogan of the 1990s and the logo

imprinted souvenirs from a Hard Rock

Cafe or a Planet Hollywood restaurant

act as "passports," proclaiming not only that you have been somewhere interesting but that you have consumed a highly rated experience. What is significant is not so much the role of consumption in helping to assert status and identity but the fact that consumption is increasingly programmed by giant entertainment corporations.

In the Disney theme parks, happy endings are guaranteed. But Cinderella may find it tougher sledding in the fantasy cities of the early 21st century. It seems unlikely that the economic benefits from large-scale megaprojects like festival marketplaces, designer sports arenas and high-technology entertainment centres will automatically spill over into the economically depressed neighbourhoods which frequently surround them.

Cleveland, Ohio, was once an industrial powerhouse before its decline in the 1960s. Today, in the U.S., it is celebrated as the exemplar of resurgent urban development. With a restored entertainment district (Playhouse Square), a newly minted sports complex (Gateway Centre) and the "Rock and Roll Hall of Fame" designed by superstar architect IM Pei, Cleveland is the American "comeback city" of the 1990s. Yet these glittering tourist destinations have made little economic difference to the adjacent inner city where 40 per cent of Clevelanders remain trapped beneath the poverty line.

Tourists and middle-class day-trippers flock to these glass and plastic entertainment complexes where they feel reasonably safe, though few venture beyond to patronise local bars, restaurants and small shops. Atlantic City, New Jersey is a case in point. Since 1978, the year casinos were first introduced to the city, 100 of the city's 250 restaurants have closed and its population has declined by more than a tenth. Property values have declined and there has been little demand for new inner-city housing, manufacturing or warehouse space. Soon, a section of the one remaining stable, middle-class black neighbourhood in the city will be levelled to build a tunnel linking the Atlantic City Expressway to a new \$1.5 billion casino.

Not only are these fantasy entertainment zones expensive to build — Paramount's "Star Trek: The Experience" complex at the Las Vegas Hilton rings in at \$70 million — they also have a short consumer shelf-life. This means they can be undertaken only by a clutch of deep-pocketed global entertainment companies, like Disney, Universal, Sony, Warner Bros, Paramount and Rank, who own

enormous film libraries and gold-plated portfolios of recognisable cartoon and movie characters. Consequently, the line-up of attractions at most themed destinations is highly uniform with little local content. In these new leisure spaces, citizenship becomes equated with brand-name consumption, and the dream of a lively and creative public culture is crowded out by pre-packaged corporate entertainment.

Even holidays such as Christmas and Halloween are being co-opted by commercial "theming." In a recent news release, Madison Square Garden in New York City announced that the clothing company, Tommy Hilfiger, had agreed to sponsor "Madison Square Garden," a Halloween attraction which runs for 10 days every October. Designed to become a New York institution, much like the Christmas Spectacular at the Radio City Music Hall, there are plans to take the show across the country and into Canada.

Nor are the effects of this themed-entertainment juggernaut restricted to North America. Until the recent economic meltdown in Asia, American commercial culture was flourishing in Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and other nations in the Asia-Pacific region. Tokyo Disneyland, with an annual attendance of over 17 million, is the most popular theme park on earth. There is a Nike store in Shanghai, Hard Rock Cafes in Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Taipei. And "Believe It or Not!" attractions in Korea, Thailand and Hong Kong. Universal Studios has begun construction of a \$1.6 billion entertainment park near Osaka, Japan, which will have areas themed to various American places (Hollywood, New York, San Francisco) and motion picture Jaws, Jurassic Park.

Australia, too, has embraced the entertainment model of urban development. The latest example is the \$66 million Sega World entertainment centre housed in a distinctive glass-coned building on the eastern side of Darling Harbour in Sydney.

As the Japanese scholar, Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, has shrewdly observed, in the post-modern age, America has become another brand name — just like Chanel and Armani. The danger is that this seductive new world of themed and branded entertainment will be one where any sense of common purpose or true citizenship is swamped by "made-in-America" fantasies.

— *The Independent*

Higher education in Africa

By John Gay Yoh

suggests an optimistic view in favour of, and concern on the part of, African educationalists for the advancement of higher education, the main problem facing Africa in this field lies in that thousands of graduates compose 60 per cent of the unemployed in several countries in the continent. I think the trend should have been to produce graduates who are specially trained for employment with adequate managerial and technical skills to become self-employed. Moreover, the rapid increase in the number of universities in several African countries (about 20 universities were established in the Sudan between 1990 and 1997) is oftentimes politically motivated, coupled with little attention to the significance of each university and inadequate arrangements for funding it. In the case of Nigeria and the Sudan, the need for the pursuit of excellence was jettisoned in favour of a politicised approach of making promises in words and muddling through in practice. It is to be recalled that the current major British or American universities were founded in the period when most African countries emerged from Western colonialism, yet it is equally true that a few of them have been in existence quite longer. There is no doubt that the rest of world educationalists, Africans do believe that universities and other higher education institutions belong to world community, and thus there is no need to create what some like to refer to as "an African university," as separate from British, American or French universities. Assuming that there is a need for an African university, and since intellectual, economic and political needs of African societies differ from the needs of European or American societies, it is plausible to emphasise that African universities have to undertake special programmes to serve African distinct interests, which no doubt differ in essence from Polish, Japanese or Turkish universities.

In the same way, inasmuch as the needs of a given society may differ from one part of Africa to another, so would, logically, the character of an African university vary from one African country to another. Each African nation has its own special characteristics. Its universities should reflect and indeed should bear the stamps of these special traits. With this distinction in mind, African universities should reflect the needs of the continent by providing African societies with skills that will enable them to participate, both male and female, in the economic and social development of their region.

There are currently over 200 universities in sub-Saharan Africa. While this figure

African university curriculum should be science-oriented with strong practical component throughout the four or five years of under-graduate studies. Emphasis should also be put on the language of instruction. Where English or French are languages of instruction, students should take additional courses in the language before specialisation.

In several African universities, many students do not perform well because of language deficiency. In social sciences, the emphasis should be on familiarising students with issues of contemporary man and his social order. Inadequate understanding of language would certainly hinder the desired goal of providing a required scope and character of the disciplines of the social sciences. Natural sciences are offered at African universities to stimulate interest in science and to establish the interrelationship between scientific disciplines and to create awareness of the services of sciences to man and the effect of science to society. This is not enough. Laboratories at universities should be specialised and equipped. Ill-equipped laboratories will turn an African science student into a theoretician and a recipient of scientific knowledge and not an active inquisitive participant.

As for humanities, the focus should have been to analyse the basic aspects of culture — not only African culture — but also by exploring the creative action of man and philosophy, literature, arts, music of Islamic and Western worlds. Emphasis should be on African culture. The total advantage for higher education in Africa should not be described in terms of the numbers who complete their university studies. Hundreds of thousands have graduated from universities, and yet nothing much emerged from them. Those who dropped out from universities and colleges may yet prove useful and decent morally in their communities on the account of their experience. What is the benefit if the continent secures the quantity, by sacrificing the quality of the education, the ultimate goal of every educationalist? As often is the case, the role of vocational schools and junior colleges is taking in the surplus of those who did not make it through university. After all, it is the legitimate right of every nation to develop institutions which will enable it to acquire and advance knowledge relevant to the challenges which will face its people in the future. And one such important institution is the university.

With the deterioration of national economies in most African countries and the growing discontent in university campuses, the governments' responses are often geared towards increasing control. It is noted that government's appointed "uni-

versity councils," set up to watch the university administration activities, often have little to do with the academic content of the university, rather more with sectional, tribal or individual grievances. The famous African student councils of the 1960s have become these days voluntary agencies, hence opening the doors for groups financed outside the campuses. That seems to suggest why we see that several African universities witnessed the rise of secret cults and gang warfare on campus. One should thus ask which comes first: over-centralisation and inefficiency of university managers or the failure of professors in Africa to deliver qualitative academic excellence?

Many people seem to favour the establishment of more private universities with funding from overseas at the expense of national higher education institutions. The main point to be highlighted is that where there have been a higher level of faculty scholarship, training and social commitment on the part of the educational planners, educational directions have been positive. Professors should be research-oriented and not simply recruited to teach. What needs to be done is to encourage indigenous research and teaching, with better understanding of historical forces which shape the growth and change in African societies.

Then comes the question of external aid to African university. Is aid most effective when it goes directly to the university or through government institutions or through the central government? Considering that assistance may vary in kind; i.e. funds for planning, travel grants or scholarships, should it be channelled through cooperative arrangements with foreign universities? African leaders and educationalists should know that they are training the future leaders of their countries. These men and women might not have interest in the subjects they study at university, but certainly they know why they are there and will wish to succeed by any means. The African higher education planners should therefore work out ways and means to inspire the African youth to respect African traditions, to show concern for the public good and to possess a special attachment for the nation — an essential ingredient of good citizenship — a useful element no nation can afford to do without. This should be the type of university education we should yearn for: a university for the Africans of tomorrow.

The writer is a Research Associate at the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Amman

Abuses by white health workers during apartheid

By David Briscoe
Associated Press

WHITE DOCTORS covered up torture of black patients, blacks were denied health care, and hospitals turned over untreated black patients directly to police in a series of abuses cited in a new U.S. report on South African apartheid.

The racism that infected the system was so deep that it will continue to cause "pain and injury" to the country's medical system unless concerted action is taken, says the report to be presented at a symposium Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Physicians for

Analysts see trouble ahead for U.S. economy

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. economic momentum will flag this year with growth limited to around two per cent according to a survey of analysts in the Wall Street Journal Monday.

U.S. growth is expected to slow in the face of a stock market correction, weaker consumer spending and worsening financial conditions overseas.

The survey, based on predictions from 54 economists, foresees U.S. gross domestic product growing 2.1 per cent in the first quarter of 1999, 1.8 per cent in the second, two per cent in the third and 2.4 per cent in the fourth.

U.S. gross domestic product expanded at an annualised rate of 3.7 per cent in third quarter 1998, the most recent quarter for which official growth figures have been released.

In addition to a possible

downturn in shares, less active consumers and sluggish growth in export markets, the economy could also suffer from single-digit oil prices and anxiety over year-2000 computer problems.

While lower gasoline costs may be welcomed by U.S. motorists, the plunge in prices could aggravate financial crises in certain key countries, warned Regional Financial Associates economist Mark Zandi.

"Economies ranging from Mexico to Australia depend on revenues earned in oil and other commodity sales," he told the Wall Street Journal.

"With oil revenues falling quickly, so are the foreign reserves of those nations ... With dwindling reserves, these nations will face depreciating currencies and the risk of another round of global financial turmoil will

increase," Zandi said.

One economist, Edward Yardeni of Deutsche Bank Securities, warned that the United States could fall into recession this year because of disruptions to global commerce brought on by the year-2000 computer bug.

The recession could become apparent before 2000 if the public becomes alarmed and takes precautions."

"If stock prices fall sharply in 1999, in anticipation of a recession in 2000, the resulting loss in confidence could cause consumers to retrench in 1999 and trigger a recession sooner as well," he said.

In other findings, 39 of the 54 analysts surveyed by the Wall Street Journal foresaw a spurt in inflation this year. Thirty-three said there was as much as a 30 per cent chance the stock market would turn bearish in 1999.

EU economy splutters as its new currency shines

LONDON (R) — Europe might be basking in the glow of the successful launch of its single currency, but shadows are lengthening over its economy.

A string of grim reports this week has confirmed the severe damage inflicted on manufacturers by Asia's slump and reinforced expectations that the newborn European Central Bank will cut interest rates before the end of the quarter.

But with consumer spending proving resilient, many economists remain confident that the 11 members of the euro zone will pull out of the downturn within months, skirting recession, and enjoy a rebound in growth in the second half of the year.

"There is a cyclical downturn which is quite vicious, especially in the manufacturing sector, but that should be overcome sometime in the spring," Joachim Fels of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter in London.

Gordon Moffat, the Brussels-based director for international affairs at Europe's steel producers' trade group, Eurofer, hopes the optimism is justified.

The steel industry, which employs more than 280,000 people in Europe, has borne the brunt of the economic crisis that engulfed Asia and Russia.

Morgan does not expect the region as a whole to suffer a quarter of negative growth and believes things will start gradually looking up towards the end of this quarter.

Asia, which used to take nearly a third of Europe's steel exports, bought 56 per cent less steel last year.

What's more, Asian steelmakers targeted Europe as an outlet for products unwanted at home and managed to boost their share of the market from four per cent to 25 per cent in 1998.

The result was a plunge in prices followed in the fourth quarter by a production cut of about 10 per cent that Moffat said could be repeated in 1999. As many as 40,000 European steel jobs could be at risk.

"We don't expect any rapid improvement," Moffat said. "Even if the situation stabilizes in Asia this year, there won't be any pick up for several years to come," he added.

Nevertheless, the outlook is not entirely gloomy. European steel producers have filed anti-dumping suits against several countries that Moffat said should help slow import penetration.

"We don't expect much growth in demand in the first part of this year, but demand nevertheless should be relatively satisfactory and it should pick up in the second half if the economic situation improves," he said.

The plight of manufacturers was reflected on Monday in depressing purchasing managers reports from Germany, Italy, Sweden and Britain.

Household spending has so far cushioned the industrial slowdown but economists say consumer confidence could take a knock if the gradual improvement in Europe's labour market is reversed.

Friday's December jobs report from Germany, which accounts for a third of Euroland output, could be crucial, with economists braced for a sharp deterioration. Industrial output figures next Tuesday are also expected to show a sharp drop.

"There's lots of gloomy news to come in the next few weeks," said Ellen van der Gulik of U.S. investment bank JP Morgan, whose euro-zone economic activity indicator released on Monday showed overall output stagnating in November.

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Clinton wants \$1,000 tax credit for elderly care

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Monday proposed a \$1,000 tax credit for families taking care of elderly and disabled relatives as the centrepiece of a five-year, \$6.2 billion health care initiative.

Clinton, pushing ahead with a domestic agenda in spite of the persistent impeachment crisis, said the tax credit was needed to help defray the "staggering" cost of long-term care, which is rarely covered by private insurance or Medicare.

At a White House event with his wife Hillary, Clinton said the tax credit would help the elderly and

disabled live at home rather than in nursing homes, which can be more expensive.

He plans to propose it in his budget for the 2000 fiscal year that begins next Oct. 1.

"Our parents worked and saved and sacrificed for us in our youth. Adult children are now working, saving and sacrificing for their parents in old age. It is the cycle of life, and one we should recognize and reward," Clinton said.

The tax credit would provide financial support to about two million Americans, including 1.2 million older Americans. It would

cost \$5.5 billion over five years.

It would begin phasing out for couples making \$110,000 a year, with a cut-off at \$130,000 a year, and unmarried taxpayers making over \$75,000, with a cut-off at \$95,000.

Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said the tax credit would be paid for by closing tax code loopholes and other revenue-raising measures. She gave no specifics, saying the funding for the plan would be part of the traditional negotiating process between the White House and Congress.

UAE reports negative growth

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) saw a 5.5 per cent drop in its gross domestic product (GDP) in 1998 due to plummeting oil prices, the federal government said Tuesday.

GDP fell from 180 billion dirhams (\$49 billion) in 1997 to 170 billion dirhams (\$46.3 billion) last year, Planning Minister Mullaib Ibn Ahmad Al Mullaib said, quoted by newspaper.

He said crude prices had dropped by 27 per cent over the year, undermining expected government revenues, 60 per cent of which come from oil sales.

The non-oil sector, meantime, grew 4.7 per cent over 1998, contributing 133 billion dirhams (\$36 billion) to GDP, as opposed to 127 billion dirhams (\$34 billion) in 1997.

The minister said he expected GDP to grow by 3.5 per cent in 1999.

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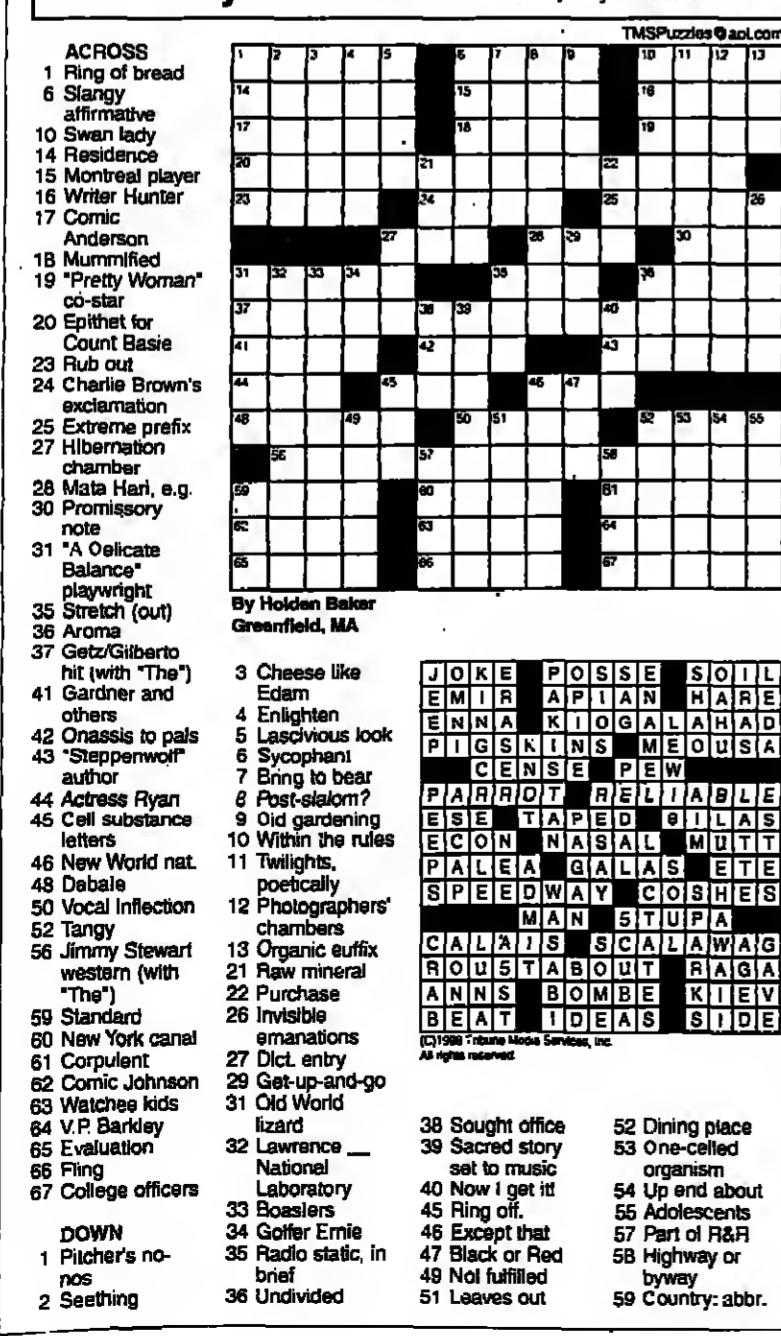
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THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

TMSpuzzles@aoe.com



Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

CENTRAL BANK BULLETIN

CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	GBRITIAN POUND	GERMANY MARK	SWITZERLAND FRANC	FRANCE FRANC	JAPAN YEN	US DOLLAR	GBRITIAN POUND	GERMANY MARK	SWITZERLAND FRANC	FRANCE FRANC	JAPAN YEN
US DOLLAR	1.0000	0.6552	0.5802	0.7320	0.1785	0.1953	0.2310	0.2077	0.7080	0.2310	0.1772	0.6029
GBRITIAN POUND	0.6042	1.0000	1.0712	0.9488	0.9745	1.0344	1.2456	1.1003	3.7570	1.2456	1.2456	0.8208
GERMANY MARK	1.6850	0.9793	1.0000	0.9427	0.9427	1.0130	1.2186	1.0775	3.6730	1.2186	1.2186	0.8208
SWITZERLAND FRANC	0.5335	0.1005	0.1026	1.0000	0.9792	0.7949	0.7949	0.7949	0.7949	0.7949	0.7949	0.7949
FRANCE FRANC	7.9088	0.9688	0.9872	9.6188	9.4179	1.0000	1.0205	1.0837	3.8280	1.0205	1.0205	0.9800
JAPAN YEN	1.5922	0.2962	0.3025	2.9488	2.8855	3.0364	3.0364	3.0364	3.0364	3.0364	3.0364	3.0364
YUAN CHINA	2.6571	0.5083	0.5080	4.7350	4.7350	5.0368	5.0368	5.0368	5.0368	5.0368	5.0368	5.0368
EGYPT POUND	4.6145	0.9084	0.9280	5.6145	5.6145	6.0401	6.0401	6.0401	6.0401	6.0401	6.0401	6.0401
LEBANON LIRA	21.4831	4.0552	4.1410	24.3448	24.3448	24.0055	24.0055	24.0055	24.0055	24.0055	24.0055	24.0055
EGYPTIAN POUND	1.4782	0.4553	0.4645	2.6525	2.6525	2.6525	2.6525	2.6525	2.6525	2.6525	2.6525	2.6525
YEMENI RIAL	0.2357	0.2357	0.2454	4.4271	4.3550	4.4271	4.4271	4.4271	5.5421	4.4271	4.4271	4.4271
YEMENI RIAL	0.2357	0.2357	0.2454	4.4271	4.3550	4.4271	4.4271	4.4271	5.5421	4.4271	4.4271	4.4271
YEMENI RIAL	0.2357	0.2357	0.2454	4.4271	4.3550	4.4271	4.4271	4.4271	5.5421	4.4271	4.4271	4.4271
YEMENI RIAL	0.2357	0.2357	0.2454	4.4271	4.3550	4.4271	4.4271	4.4271	5.5421	4.4271	4.4271	4.4271
YEMENI RIAL	0.2357	0.2357	0.2454	4.4271</td								

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Potash company boosts profit by 30%

THE ARAB Potash Company (APC) generated JD25 million net profit last year, 50 per cent more than the net profit posted in 1997, APC Chairman Saleh Israeid told Al Ra'i. He revealed that total production during 1998 amounted to 1.53 million tonnes, 7.9 per cent more than the 1997 output.

put, and that sales totalled 1.52 million tonnes, 4.8 per cent higher than the sales recorded in the previous year. Israeid said the company earned about \$163 million in hard currencies from potash sales to various countries around the world (Al Ra'i).

Euro seen removing currency fluctuations with eleven countries in Europe

DEALINGS IN the euro will remove currency fluctuations with the eleven countries of the European Union (EU) which have good trade ties with Jordan. Finance Minister Michel Mario commented on the launch of the new European currency. "Dealing with a unified EU currency will be much easier than dealing with a big number of currencies," he said. Mario ruled out any negative effects from euro dealings.

Central Bank Governor Ziyad Fariz did not rule out the possibility of settling payments with Europe in the euro currency. "The euro has become a currency just like other currencies and there is a possibility of it being in the reserve structure of hard currencies at the Central Bank," he said. Fariz explained that the euro is not different from similar other currencies such as the dollar or the yen and that shifting to repayment or collection of commercial payments in euro is accessible and valid.

Asked if the euro could become a main currency for the Central Bank, Fariz said: "It is one of the important strong currencies and may form part of the Kingdom's reserves in the future along with other currencies." Mario concluded that exporters and importers can immediately open euro accounts to conduct transactions with Europe. The euro was traded in the Jordanian market at a buying rate of 839.5 fils and a selling rate of 843.7 fils (Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).

Ammari expects Jordanian-European partnership agreement to be ratified next year

THE JORDANIAN-European partnership agreement did not enter the implementation stage at the beginning of this year as expected because the agreement was not ratified by all European parliaments and also by the Jordanian Parliament. said Planning Minister Nabil Ammar. He did not expect the agreement to be ratified before the start of the year 2000.

Ammari announced that Jordan will receive between \$55 million and \$75 million this year

in financial aid from the European Union to rehabilitate the national industry. Jordan received around \$125 million in aid last year. The minister indicated that although the partnership agreement was not ratified, there are many projects, financed by the European Union and the United States, providing technical assistance and consultations to improve the Jordanian industry and increase the value added to enable it to compete in both local and outside markets (Al Dustour).

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR JANUARY, WEDNESDAY 6, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The moon in Virgo puts a spotlight on your work. Virgo is the sign of service and service-related occupations. You're at your best when you're taking care of others, and if you're not already in a career that demands it, today is an excellent day to find that kind of job. Check out the local possibilities.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Mercury, symbolising the mind, is going into Capricorn today. Now you get to think about travel, romance, adventure, excitement and trying something you've never done before. This condition is only going to be in effect for several weeks, so don't procrastinate. Today is an excellent time to get started.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Your ruling planet, Mercury, is going into Capricorn today. Capricorn is the sign of hard work, and for you, it also symbolises other people's money. So if you work hard during the next few weeks, you ought to be able to get more that. At least they'll get to back you on a project you have in mind.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You could run into trouble today as you try to put a new skill into practice. You may have forgotten one of the subtle nuances. Part of the learning process comes through books, but the other part comes only through experience. It's possible you'll feel a little awkward today. Don't take it personally.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) An opportunity to take on more work could lead to a sizeable increase in income. This could be another job or simply doing more of the same. If you don't have a routine, you probably ought to put one in. The way to success right now is to burn out more of what ever is needed, as close as perfectly possible.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Your ruling planet, Mercury, is going into Capricorn today. This ought to be fun. Capricorn is in your solar fifth house of romance, games and children. Mercury means you'll be stronger in all those areas. With the sun also in Capricorn, your plans will be easily met. Don't spend much time lost in contemplation; action is required.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) There's a household project you've been considering but haven't quite had time for. Now, conditions are becoming more favourable for it. There will be a bit of a mess before things turn out the way you want them, but that's OK. Plan on spending today and tomorrow with the chaos: by Friday you'll have things whipped into shape.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Mercury, symbolising the mind, is going into Capricorn, which is in your solar third house of education. The sun is in Capricorn, too. That means you'll be even smarter than usual for the next several weeks. You'll be able to figure things out way ahead of time, and this could be quite profitable. Set a high goal. You're powerful.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't say you're going to do something unless you really intend to do it. Then you'd better follow through, because people are watching. There's something big ahead, and they're thinking about asking you to do it. It's a project you'd be perfect for, and you'd love it, too, so put on a good show today.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You're smart, and getting smarter. You're a person who learns through experience. In the next few days, the more you practice, the better you'll get at what you're doing. With the moon in Virgo right now, you won't settle for anything less than perfection. And you know what? You shouldn't, either.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Finances are still the topic of discussion in your life, either your money or money you share with other people. It could be loans, sales you're interested in making, or sales you're interested in attending. At any rate, it's a good time to make a bargain and get your financial affairs into order. Stop resisting and just get practical.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) If you're embroiled in an argument, perhaps it's time to bring in an objective opinion. This is a tried and true technique, and it's apt to work again. The problem you and your adversary have is that you're pushing each other's buttons, and you're not listening. Both of you could listen to this third party, however, and that's the key to your success.

Credit Lyonnais plans to axe 3,000 jobs over three years

PARIS (AFP) — Troubled state-owned bank Credit Lyonnais said Tuesday it was planning to axe about 1,000 jobs a year over the next three years.

The bank, which is to be privatised this year, said the 1,000 jobs to be shed this year would include 564 jobs that had been due to go in 1998.

The current payroll is around 30,000 and the aim is to reduce that to around 29,000 by the end of the year, the bank said. The move would bring the total job cuts since 1994 to almost 9,000.

France's La Tribune newspaper said Tuesday that the bank planned to axe some 1,500 jobs this year, including the 564 held over from 1998.

The government is to privatise the bank before the end of October, a condition set by the European Commission for approving a third massive state aid plan for Lyonnais last year.

The Commission has estimated the bank's total cost to the state at about 150 billion francs (22.86 billion euros) through a combination of losses on property investment, bad management and skulduggery.

Trade friction between Japan and the United States is likely to be the most significant theme for the foreign exchange market in 1999, ahead of U.S. presidential elections next year, said Taro Ogai, manager of the Industrial Bank of Japan Ltd's interna-

Yen seen rising further against dollar, euro

TOKYO (R) — The yen may strengthen against both the dollar and the euro in the near term amid worries about the U.S. economy, rising Japanese long-term rates and speculation of a credit easing in euro-zone countries, dealers in Tokyo say.

"Japanese traders are pessimistic about the outlook for the U.S. economy, and they think there is a chance that the dollar may fall further, or even collapse," Kazuo Takayama, chief manager of foreign exchange sales at Midland Bank in Tokyo, said in an interview with Reuters Television.

Eisuke Sakakibara, Japan's vice finance minister for international affairs, gave voice to market fears in an interview in Tuesday's edition of the Nihon Keizai newspaper, saying the U.S. economy looked "fairly bubble-like."

"My utmost concern is high U.S. stock prices... A nation whose savings ratio is negative is consuming a lot. Such an economy is bound to slow once stock prices fall," the newspaper quoted Sakakibara as saying.

Sakakibara's comments and his refusal on Tuesday to comment on current foreign exchange levels helped trigger the dollar's fall to 110.70 yen, its lowest level since June 11, 1997, although it recovered to around 111.30 by late afternoon in Tokyo.

The euro stood at 131.79/93 yen, compared with 132.30 yen in New York late on Monday and 130.80 early on Tuesday.

Market players interpreted Sakakibara's silence as a tacit approval of current exchange rate levels.

Unless Japanese monetary authorities intervene to stem the dollar's fall, dealers said, it could hit 105 yen before the end of March, especially since any slowdown in the U.S. economy could cause U.S.-Japan trade friction to boil over.

Continued speculation that the European Central Bank could lower interest rates before the end of March could also weigh on the euro against the yen, dealers said.

"The euro could fall to around 120 yen before the end of the year," Ogai said.

tional treasury department.

"I think trade friction will flare up from here on. It could definitely become a focal point of the market," he said.

U.S. President Bill Clinton could try to play up trade issues with Japan in order to deflect attention away from his Senate trial to impeachment him, Ogai said.

Meanwhile, a rise in Japanese long-term interest rates caused by concerns about an oversupply of government bonds was expected to stem Japanese capital outflows to both the United States and the euro zone.

"Japanese long-term rates are rising and a narrowing in the (U.S.-Japan) interest rate gap is encouraging yen buying," said Ryohei Muramatsu, manager for treasury and foreign exchange at Commerzbank's Tokyo branch.

The spread between the key 10-year Japanese government bond and the 30-year benchmark U.S. Treasury bond had narrowed to 325 basis points by Tuesday afternoon, down from over 400 basis points in October last year, when JGB yields fell to a record low.

Interest rate differentials between Japan and the euro zone have also shrunk, and Japanese investors may not find yields on euro-denominated bonds as attractive as before, said Yasuhiro Tsuru, manager for Mitsubishi Trust and Banking Corp.

"Japanese investors have already aggressively shifted investment from the dollar to the euro since the end of last year, and I'm not sure they would be willing to begin fresh investment in euro-denominated bonds now at the expense of taking on fresh currency risk," Tsuru said.

Continued speculation that the European Central Bank could lower interest rates before the end of March could also weigh on the euro against the yen, dealers said.

"The euro could fall to around 120 yen before the end of the year," Ogai said.

Jordanian banks extend \$21m loan to Palestinian firm

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nine Jordanian banks led by the Housing Bank, the second largest bank in the Kingdom, Monday reached a \$21 million syndicated bank loan agreement with the Palestinian Telecommunication Company, said Maher Haboush, from the Housing Bank.

"The deal comes as a part of bilateral efforts between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to boost the economic cooperation between the two sides," said Zuhair Khouri, chairman of the board of directors of the Housing Bank.

The other Jordanian banks which signed the deal are the Jordan Kuwaiti Bank, Union Bank, Export and Finance Bank, Arab Banking Corporation (Jordan branch), Jordan Investment and Finance Bank, Jordan National Bank, Philadelphia Investment Bank and ANZ Grindlays Bank.

"The efforts of the Jordanian banks reflect the policy of Jordan's government in supporting our Palestine brothers through rebuilding their infrastructure, especially in the telecommunication area which is considered a cornerstone for globalisation," he said.

"The deal will enable the PNA to upgrade telecommunications services in the West Bank as well as Gaza Strip. The deal will enable the Palestinian community to be updated on the world's latest technology," said Khouri.

Jordan signed a trade protocol with the Palestinian Authority in 1997.

The deal aims at helping the Palestinian Authority in its projects via branches of the Jordanian banks involved in the deal, said

A.F.M TRADE ACCESS 4646868			
Company	Open Price	Close Price	Change
BANKS			
ARAB BK	214.500	213.500	- 0.47%
INTL BK	1.560	1.540	- 1.28%
MIDDLE EAST BK	1.040	1.050	+ 0.95%
THE HOUSING BK	2.750	2.800	+ 1.82%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.580	1.630	+ 3.15%
JD. GULF BK	0.700	0.740	+ 5.71%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.620	1.680	+ 3.70%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.570	0.570	0.00%
BANKS INDEX			
	280.520	280.520	point = -0.06%
INSURANCE			
JO. FRENCH INS	2.710	2.700	- 0.37%
JO. GULF INS	1.690	1.770	+ 4.73%
INSURANCE INDEX			
	126.080	126.080	point = +0.36%
SERVICES			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.630	1.710	+ 4.91%
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0.800	0.800	0.00%
AL-ZARQA FOR EDU	0.820	0.830	+ 1.22%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.170	1.170	0.00%
SERVICES INDEX			
	110.940	110.940	point = +0.93%
INDUSTRY			
CEMENT	3.350	3.520	+ 5.07%
PHOSPHATE	3.570	3.750	+ 4.79%
ARAB POTASH	2.800	2.900	0.00%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.300	10.480	+ 1.75%
THE IND. COMM. & AGRIC	1.150	1.110	- 3.48%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2.740	2.810	+ 2.55%
CERAMIC IND	1.100	1.100	0.00%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.240	1.240	0.00%
ARAB CHEMICAL DETER	7.000	7.050	+ 0.71%
INTL. STEEL	0.500	0.480	- 4.00%
RAFIA	0.530	0.530	0.00%
DAR AL DAWA	5.200	5.400	+ 3.85%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0.650	0.650	0.00%
JD. STEEL	0.980	0.990	+ 1.02%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1.860	1.870	+ 0.54%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.400	0.400	0.00%
INTL. IND	0.370	0.360	- 2.70%
PETRD. - CHEMICAL	0.330	0.340	+ 3.03%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	1.150	1.090	- 5.22%
INTL. CABLE	0.650	0.650	0



World No. 1 Lindsay Davenport and Pete Sampras



Sampras, Davenport pick up ITF World Championships

LONDON (AP) — Americans Pete Sampras and Lindsay Davenport were named Tuesday as the International Tennis Federation World Champions.

Sampras, who finished the season as world No. 1 for a record-sixth consecutive year, also won the ITF award for a sixth-straight time.

Davenport, who finished the season ranked No. 1 and ended the 80-week reign of Martina Hingis, is a first-time winner of the ITF singles award.

The ITF men's double prize went to the Dutch pair of

Jacco Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis, both of the Netherlands. The women's winners were Davenport and Natasha Zvereva.

The wheelchair World Championships award was won by David Hall and Daniela Di Toro, both of Australia. The award for juniors went to Roger Federer of Switzerland and Jelena Dokic of Australia.



Spanish driver Jose Maria Servia and co-driver Thierry Delli-Zotti from Switzerland in their Schlesser-Renault Buggy during the 4th stage of the Granada-Dakar rally between Tan-Tan, Morocco, and Bir Mngrein, Mauritania. The team is second in the overall standings (AP photo)

Reeves readies himself and team for NFL playoffs

SUWANEE, Georgia (AP) — Three weeks after undergoing heart surgery, Dan Reeves sounds like he'll be back with the Atlanta Falcons for the playoffs.

The NFL's coach of the year received a clean bill of health after an examination Monday morning, then spent the rest of the day budded with his assistants, working on a game plan for Saturday's divisional game against the San Francisco 49ers.

Reeves broke away from the meetings long enough to speak by telephone on his weekly radio show.

"I had a great day," Reeves said on WGST. "My energy level is getting better and better. ...

Hopefully, I will get a good night's rest and be ready to go (today). I have a chance to be on the sidelines Saturday. We'll just have to wait and see how it goes during practice this week."

Reeves, who is taking blood thinner medication, may have to work out of the press box coaching booth because of all the bodies flying around on the sidelines.

But he has resumed driving himself to the Falcons' suburban training complex. Last week, doctors instructed him to use a driver and sit in the backseat, lessening the chance of injury if there was a wreck.

"Knowing coach Reeves, I would specu-

late that he'll probably be in the booth someplace," Anderson said. "I don't think he'll be on the sideline because of the risk."

Defensive coordinator Rich Brooks has been the acting head coach since Reeves underwent quadruple bypass surgery on Dec. 14 and missed the final two games of the regular season.

"I don't know exactly what Dan will be involved in this week," Brooks said. "Last week, he just told me to keep doing what I'm doing. I guess that's what I'll do until he tells me otherwise."

Reeves and the rest of his NFC West champion Falcons got a chance to just relax over weekend and await their opponent for the first postseason contest in Atlanta since 1980.

The answer didn't come until Sunday evening, when Terrell Owens grabbed a 25-yard touchdown pass with three seconds remaining, giving the San Francisco 49ers a 30-27 victory over the Green Bay Packers.

"I think we have the advantage by the fact that we were able to watch and rest up this weekend." All Pro running back Jamal Anderson said. "I didn't do anything. I left my house maybe three times. I just rested."

The 49ers, who finished

two games behind Atlanta (14-2) in the division, handed the Falcons one of their losses. In the third game of the season, San Francisco built a 31-7 lead by halftime at 3Com Park and cruised to a 31-20 victory.

In the rematch, with the teams tied for the NFC West lead, the Falcons responded with a 31-19 victory on their home field, snapping a five-game losing streak against the 49ers. Atlanta finished the regular season with a nine-game winning streak to claim only the second division title in team history.

Union gives NBA its 'final offer' as deadline looms

NEW YORK (AFP) — National Basketball Association commissioner David Stern received a "final" union proposal from executive director Billy Hunter here Monday in last-ditch talks aimed at saving the season.

In an hour-long meeting at a mid-town hotel, Hunter and union president Patrick Ewing presented the union response to the league's "final" proposal, submitted by Stern one week ago.

"It's going to be very tough for us to repeat that, especially if Philppoussis plays," Black said after reaching the second round of the Australian men's basketball championships with a three-set win over American Vincent Spadea.

"But we are playing at home so we will be feeling confident, it just depends on how your guys play I guess."

The Zimbabweans took advantage of a troubled Australian team last April when a virus-stricken Pat Rafter was forced to withdraw from his second singles match after losing the first.

Philppoussis had made himself unavailable after claiming Cup captain John Newcombe and coach Tony Roche had let him down when he was struggling in 1997. But he then turned up to watch the tie to the obvious annoyance of some team members.

Black notched up a win against Rafter and also beat Jason Stoltenberg to clinch the Davis Cup victory.

This year, however, Philppoussis has committed himself to playing for Australia in the first round at least.

"Black said 'a' covered medium-paced hard court was being prepared for the Zimbabwe match, with the 5,000-capacity stadium expected to be sold out.

He said he and Wayne felt the pressure of being Zimbabwe's only representatives — they play both singles and doubles in the Davis Cup — because they had always to be fit, but they relished the challenge.

"There's a lot more pressure there, it means a lot more playing for your country obviously so guys feel a bit tight and if we've been in that situation before, I think it helps if we have had a lot of matches," he said.

who have been in the NBA for a decade or more.

But the sides remain far apart on what amount of basketball-related income players will receive over the final three years of a projected six-year deal.

The league's last offer gives the union 53 percent, 53.5 percent and 54 percent of the total income. The union seeks 56, 56 and 57 percent, reaching in the final year the same level they enjoyed last season.

With each percentage point representing about \$20 million, the \$60 million difference might prove to be too much for negotiating to overcome.

The dispute has already sent European-born NBA standouts Vladis Divac and Arvydas Sabonis into deals with European clubs and top-draft pick Michael Olowokandi of Nigeria signed with an Italian team Monday.

The union reportedly has countered with a proposal that includes a \$15 million annual salary cap on players.

Hunter said he wanted to give Stern the union's proposal on New Year's Eve but would not after the league said there was no need for more discussion because their last offer had been rejected.

The union reportedly has countered with a proposal that includes a \$15 million annual salary cap on players.

Stern was back to

work after a two-week vacation in Aspen, Colorado. The union plans to have its 19-member negotiating committee here by Tuesday morning for final talks.

A sports empire projected at \$2 billion has already suffered major damage from fan anger and apathy as more than two months of games have been missed.

If a deal is reached in the next few days, a season of about 50 games could begin February 1 after free agent signings and training camps.

Teams would play up to three nights in a row before full playoffs start in May and likely finish in early July.

As the squabbles between billionaire owners and millionaire players continued, time ticked away on the final chance to salvage some portion of an NBA season before Thursday's owner-imposed deadline for a deal.

Stern said he will suggest Thursday at an owners' meeting here that the season be wiped out unless a deal is completed to end the owner-imposed lockout, now in its 18th day.

No labour fight in North American sports history has wiped out an entire season, although hockey and American football have been to the brink before last-second deals and baseball lost the 1994 World Series.

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work after a two-week vacation in Aspen, Colorado. The union plans to have its 19-member negotiating committee here by Tuesday morning for final talks.

Hingis out to claim back No. 1 spot

PERTH (AFP) — Martina Hingis made a sizzling start to her new year campaign to reclaim the World No. 1 spot back from Lindsay Davenport at the Hopman Cup on Tuesday.

But the Swiss teenager could not stop her country being beaten 2-1 by defending champions Karol Kucera and Karina Habsudova of the Slovak Republic in the first round tie of the \$550,000 mixed team tournament.

Hingis, the women's World No. 2, beat Habsudova 6-0, 6-3 in only 42 minutes before Kucera beat Heuberger 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 in the men's singles to square the tie.

Kucera and Habsudova beat Heuberger and Hingis 6-4, 6-0 in the crucial mixed doubles.

But Hingis was delighted with the start of her campaign to regain the top spot from America's Davenport, who she will play later this week when the Swiss play the U.S. duo.

The Swiss teenager said being No. 1 again was her main aim for this year.

"I am thrilled with my start here," Hingis

said.

"I felt very well and thought I played some great tennis in the first set."

"I took a month off before Christmas, and the result has been good."

Habsudova, 25, with a world ranking of 82nd, was completely outclassed by her young opponent.

Raoux levels France's clash against South Africa

South Africa's Amanda Coetzer beat France's Sandrine Testud 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 at the \$550,000 Hopman Cup tennis mixed teams tournament here on Tuesday.

But Guillaume Raoux beat Wayne Ferreira 6-3, 7-5 in 85 minutes to level the first-round match.

Testud's game fell apart in the second set after she had fought strongly before losing the opening set in an hour.

The first round match was to be decided by the mixed doubles.

Watch out for the new play

TODAY	CINEMA TEL: 463-4144 PHILADELPHIA '1' Michael Douglas & Sean Penn .. in THE GAME Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 463-4144 PHILADELPHIA '2' Bruce Willis & Richard Gere .. in THE JACKAL Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 5699238 PLAZA Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 5677430 CONCORDE Jim Carrie.. in LIAR...LIAR Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:15, 8:15 Al Pacino & Robert De Niro.. in HEAT Shows: 10:00 Adel Imam .. in RISALA ILAL WALI Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 5934793 GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Sharon Stone & Dustin Hoffman .. in SPHERE Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 5934793 GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Dustin Hoffman & John Travolta .. in MAD CITY Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 4625155 Watch out for the new play
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Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.



Croatian tennis player Goran Ivanisevic returns a backhand to his Spanish opponent Francisco Clavet, late in Doha, during the first round of the Doha Tennis tournament. Ivanisevic beat Clavet in three sets: 6-3, 6-7 (1/7), 6-4, to qualify to the second round (AFP photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

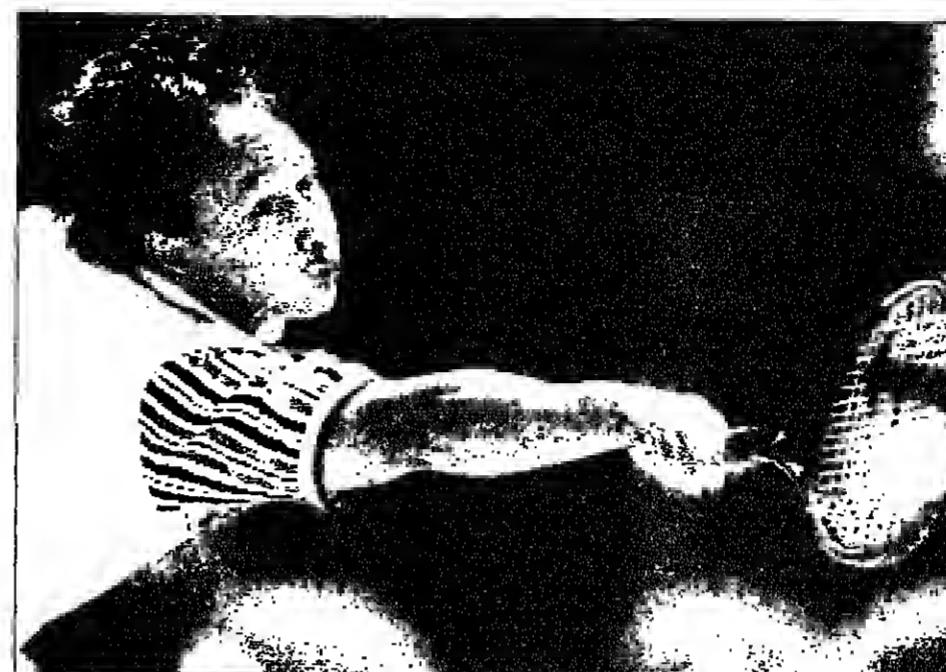
Olympic champ withdraws from Beijing final

BEIJING (AFP) — Olympic champion Claudia Poll has withdrawn from Tuesday's 200 metres women's freestyle final in the Beijing leg of the short-course World Cup, organisers said. The Costa Rican qualified in first position in the morning heats with a time of 1min 59.75secs. Organisers gave no reason for Poll's pull-out. She won the 200m freestyle gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Korda enters London event

LONDON (AP) — Petr Korda has entered next month's Guardian Direct Cup in London for his first tournament in Britain since testing positive for steroids at last year's Wimbledon. The Czech player, who defends his Australian Open title this month, had his prize money and ATP Tour points taken away after testing positive during last summer's championship at the All England club. But the International Tennis Federation took no further action after accepting Korda's case that he had no idea how the prohibited drug, nandrolone metabolites, got into his system.

Chang sets sights on No.1 spot



Michael Chang

the paper and Pat Rafter is 26, the same age.

"Everyone says Pat's best tennis is still ahead of him. I feel like my best tennis is still ahead of me... as far as calling it quits, it's never crossed my mind unless somebody's asked me."

"I think last year was a kind of unfortunate year but I've learned a lot," said Chang, who became the youngest player to win a grand slam with his 1989 French Open win.

"I think sometimes people forget that I'm only 26 years old. I was looking in

defeating American Vincent Spadea 1-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-2.

The fifth seed said he was relying on his fitness to wear down Spadea, who dictated play in the first set but wilted in the second and third, particularly after the gruelling tie-break.

"I have always been a slow starter and I tried to get off to a good start today but it just didn't really go my way," Black said.

"Vince was taking the ball early and rushing me a little bit and I didn't have my

groundstrokes like I normally do."

"I knew that I could outlast Vinnie if it came down to fitness which I think it did a bit, it's really hot out there."

Australian Pat Rafter

returned from a two-month knee injury layoff to beat Japanese qualifier Takao Suzuki 6-3, 6-0 Tuesday at the Australian men's hardcourt tennis championships.

Rafter broke Suzuki's serve for the first time in the eighth game of the opening

set then powered three unreturnable serves and a straightforward serve-volley point to take the set with a love game.

Steadily gaining in confidence and backed by a large crowd at Memorial Drive, the repeat U.S. Open winner immediately broke Suzuki in the second set en route to an easy set and match win.

Rafter said after the match it could easily have gone the other way had Suzuki been able to capitalise on early break opportunities.

"The beginning was really important. I could have been down a set and a break if you look at the chances he had," Rafter said.

"I took every chance I had and he didn't take them at all."

Maybe he got a little bit tight on those points and then I found a way to return his serve."

American former World No. 1 Jim Courier made an early exit from the tournament, losing in straight sets 7-5, 6-3 to Czech Slava Dosedel.

Courier, whose ranking tumbled to 75 by the end of 1998, never looked like getting into the match and was unable to threaten the consistent Dosedel on his service games, gaining only one break point in the two sets.

Blatter, Samaranch meet facing differences on doping, World Cup

GENEVA (AP) — Seemingly further apart than ever on doping sanctions and facing a possible clash between their competitions, the leaders of world soccer and the Olympic movement hold a crucial summit meeting today.

A meeting of FIFA president Sepp Blatter and IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch is expected to center on the opposition to the IOC's recommended minimum two-year suspension for athletes found guilty of using

Blatter's dramatic proposal, floated Sunday, to hold a World Cup every two years has raised the possibility of a collision between soccer's premier competition and the summer Olympics.

A World Cup would mean the tournament being held in Olympic years, setting the stage for scheduling conflicts and a fight for sponsorship and television rights, although Blatter said the change would likely be introduced in 2008. FIFA says a special, smaller World Cup tournament likely will be held in 2004 to mark its centenary.

A denies the summit meeting at its Zurich headquarters, where Samaranch will be accompanied by a high-level IOC delegation, will see a clash of incompatible views.

"I'd like to categorically refute this point of view," spokesman Andreas Herren said. "It can only be good that major organizations are talking to each other."

Blatter said soccer is "not at all" finished as an Olympic sport if the World Cup goes to a two-year cycle. But he stressed the Olympic competition would remain restricted mostly to players 23 and under.

The IOC and FIFA, probably the two most powerful bodies in international sport, have been at odds over the drug problem for some time.

The IOC wants all Olympic sports federations to apply common rules and penalties, including a minimum two-year suspension for athletes using steroids and other major performance-enhancing drugs.

If federations refuse to apply the rule, they risk being dropped from the Olympic programme.

Soccer, cycling and tennis have expressed reservations to the Olympic resolution, adopted in November. The other 32 Olympic federations have approved it.

FIFA officials questioned whether the penalty was enforceable and argued that not all drugs on the IOC's banned list have performance-enhancing qualities for soccer players.

Samaranch has said he is confident that FIFA will sign up to the agreement before the IOC's Feb. 2-4 world anti-doping summit in Lausanne, Switzerland.

But FIFA's medical chief appeared to dash those hopes Monday, saying that "FIFA will never change its opinion on this."

"Even if FIFA stands alone, it is old and big enough to take care of itself," medical committee chairman Michel D'Hooghe said.

FIFA's ruling executive committee last month agreed in principle to introduce random out-of-competition drug testing for players, considered the most effective way of catching drug cheats. But it didn't decide on when and how the controls would take place.

The structure of the Olympic soccer tournament is another contentious issue on Wednesday's agenda.

FIFA has always made sure that its World Cup, which started in 1930, would not be overshadowed by an Olympic soccer tournament.

Despite a request from Samaranch, the soccer body said in November it wouldn't expand a slight concession made in 1996 allowing teams to field three players over 23.

Samaranch hoped FIFA would allow teams to field five players over 23 at the 2000 Sydney Games.

But that implied no lack of commitment to the competition on FIFA's part, Herren said.

"At the under-23 level, the football tournaments have proved very attractive," he said.

IOC sports director Gilbert Felli said the issue remains open for discussion Wednesday.

The two sports bodies will also discuss the creation of a specialized soccer arbitration tribunal within the IOC-backed Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Determined Williams sisters out to dominate in 1999

HONG KONG (AFP) — Tennis sisters Venus and Serena Williams are adamant 1999 is going to be their year as they start their season with an exhibition event here Thursday.

The talented Florida-based American duo believe they are ready to make their mark in the four major tournaments, starting with this month's Australian Open.

"I think last year I did

more losing than I did winning," said world number five Venus, who holds the world record for the fastest women's serve at 125mph.

"That's a trend that I have to change this year if I want to have a chance in the majors. I feel I'm ready to be competitive," the 18-year-old said. "I'm not going to just be playing tournaments for the sake of it, I'm going to be there to

compete hard."

Williams' three career titles all came in 1998, but her dream of a first major ended in the semi-finals of the U.S. Open when she was beaten by World No. 1 Lindsay Davenport.

"Last year I had a couple of opportunities but they went by," she said. "But if I get the chances this year I'm going to take them. I'm confident about Australia."

Sister Serena, 17 years old and ranked 20th in the world, is anxious to move out of the shadow of her higher ranked sibling and has already tasted victory at the majors with mixed doubles triumphs at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in 1998.

"That gave me the confidence. I feel I'm getting stronger all the time and I'm just feeling extremely good right now," she said.

"I really think this is going to my year and that I can break through into the top level... I thank my sister for some of that. She's been an inspiration."

Also taking part in the eight-player exhibition event at Hong Kong's Victoria Park, starting here Thursday, are Germany's Steffi Graf and Russia's Anna Kournikova.

Sailor admits blunder in Around Alone race

AUCKLAND (AFP) — English sailor Mike Golding admitted Tuesday he made a critical navigation error which saw his Around Alone yacht crash into a sandbar but flatly denied the drama occurred because he was posing for the sponsor's helicopter overhead.

"It is as clear as day. I made a mistake," he told a press conference.

"I can't fully explain why I made such a stupid mistake."

Golding's Team Group 4 was Friday leading in the Around Alone around-the-world yacht when it was coming around Cape Reinga at the top of New Zealand in clear, calm weather.

The yacht was towed into Auckland Tuesday with Golding admitting to he was in tears as he came across the finishing line, knowing he was out of the event and may not make the third stage start on Friday.

In sailing circles the incident has caused amusement because the area — the meeting point of the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea — is known as an area of clashing tides.

He was leading the race by over a day at that point and as he went around Cape Reinga a helicopter came overhead and began filming him for the sponsor.

"I was not posing for the helicopter," he said.

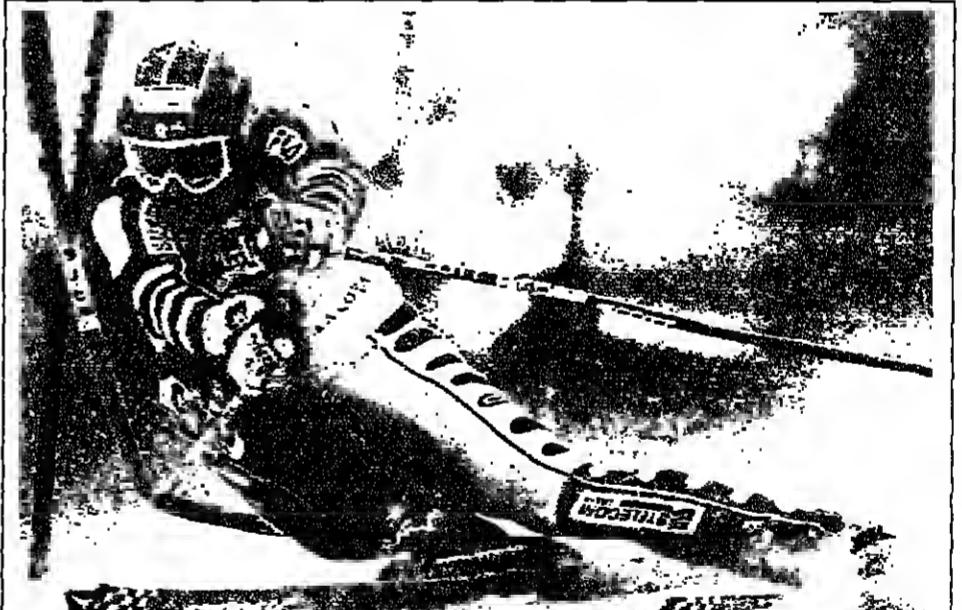
He said it was natural that he kept up speed.

The helicopter had nothing to do with it.

The fact of the matter is the responsibility of the boat and navigation is profoundly and squarely in my hall court."

Golding said his key error had been in laying down his way-points on the wrong side of Cape Reinga. He had planned his approach rather than his exit.

"The reason I did that, I



Patrick Holzer of Italy passes by a gate during the first round of the Giant Slalom World Cup event in Kranjska Gora. Holzer won the race by clocking a time of 2 minutes 14.91 seconds (Reuters photo)

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Yemen kidnap survivor says government did right thing

Agencies

AN AUSTRALIAN survivor of the Yemen kidnap drama said Tuesday more lives could have been lost if government soldiers had not tried to rescue the tourists.

Four people, including Australian Andrew Thirk, were killed during a bloody shoot-out when Yemeni security forces raided the hideout of Islamic militants who had taken the 16-member tour group and its four drivers hostage last week.

Catherine Spence, 33, said any blame for the ordeal could only be levelled at the kidnappers who had put her group in that position.

"Had different action been taken I cannot begin to guess whether the result would have been 20 dead or 20 living hostages," she said in a written statement released here.

"Statements made later by our drivers confirm that the terrorists were shooting to the army that they intended to shoot us."

Much criticism has been made about the soldiers' actions amid claims that the government had told "complete and utter lies" to try and cover-up the truth of the botched rescue effort.

Spence said it had been confirmed that the army had

attempted negotiation with the kidnappers after surrounding their hideout.

"They did not begin their 'assault' until after they had been spied on by the terrorists who opened fire on them," she said.

"I have no dispute with the Yemeni army's statement that once the shooting began they believed they had no choice but to act as quickly as possible."

"Blame, if blame must be assigned, can lie only with those who took us hostage. Regardless of whose bullets hit anyone it was the terrorists who put us in that position."

Spence returned to her parents' Sydney home in an interview published Tuesday.

Her father Ian said at the weekend that his daughter had been questioned by "Yemeni generals" for seven hours before being allowed to leave the Arab state.

The shoot-out between security forces and the kidnappers resulted in the deaths of Thirk as well as three Britons and the wounding of an American and a Briton.

It was the first time Islamic militants have kidnapped foreigners in Yemen.

Yemeni police said the kidnappers were Arab veterans of the war to push Soviet forces out of Afghanistan and had

demanded the release of their leader who was arrested after a clash with security forces early last month.

Islamic leaders, meanwhile, warned that U.S. and British investigators should not be allowed to interfere in an inquiry into the deaths of four hostages at the hands of Yemeni fundamentalists.

"We refuse any interference by foreigners in our legal system, whether they are from Britain, the United States or anywhere else," said Abdul Majid Zendani, a senior figure in Al Islah party.

"It is an attack on our sovereignty," he told the Arabic language daily Al Hayat in an interview published Tuesday.

A U.S. and British role in the investigation implied that Yemen was still "under tutelage and does not have people competent enough to do the job," Zendani added.

"If we open this door to foreigners they will push it wider open and could send us observers to monitor our administration and finances," he told the London-based newspaper.

London, the colonial power in former South Yemen until 1967, sent four men from Scotland Yard, three of them anti-terrorist experts, who began their work on Saturday.



U.S. President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary bid farewell to Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor after the two leaders held talks on Tuesday at the White House in Washington (AFP photo)

King Hussein, Clinton discuss Mideast peace, bilateral ties

(Continued from page 1)

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright showed during her last visit to Jordan in December that the administration wants to increase the U.S. annual aid to Jordan, which currently stands at \$225 million by an additional amount of \$200 million over the next five years to be allocated for security aid.

After the conclusion of the official meeting, King

Hussein and President Clinton were joined by Her Majesty Queen Noor and the U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton for another half an hour.

King Hussein and Queen Noor voiced appreciation for Mr. and Mrs. Clinton for their hospitality and concern during the King's six months of treatment at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota.

Mr. and Mrs. Clinton congratulated the King on his

recovery and reaffirmed the U.S.' commitment to further bolster ties of cooperation with Jordan.

The meeting was attended by senior U.S. State Department officials and on the Jordanian side by General Intelligence Department Director Samih Battikhi and Ambassador Muasher.

On the other hand, King Hussein visited the State Department where he discussed with Albright the

Shahak poised to challenge Netanyahu

(Continued from page 1)

TEL AVIV (R) — For Israeli voters, the question is not "Amnon who?" but "Amnon, how?" Already a household name, former army chief Amnon Lipkin-Shahak was arrested Feb. 19 in the southern town of Ma'an during a standoff between Iraq and the United Nations over weapons inspections.

Pro-Iraqi riots broke out the following day in the Jordanian town during which one man died from a bullet fired by a demonstrator and more than 20 others were wounded.

Shahak was sentenced on May 12 to nine months in prison for "inciting the people to demonstrate illegally which resulted in crimes."

His Majesty King Hussein pardoned Shahak later in May but the opposition figure refused to accept the pardon, preferring to stay in prison.

and the Labour party led by another former army chief, Ehud Barak.

"We need peace at home first and then peace with our neighbours as well," he told reporters last week in remarks that did not go beyond platitudes.

An opinion poll published on Tuesday by the Tami Steinmetz Centre for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University indicated strong public support for the establishment of a centrist party.

Of the 500 people surveyed in December, 46 per cent said they supported the founding of a centre bloc compared with 30 per cent who expressed opposition.

"Enthusiasm for the concept of such a party can be attributed first of all to the disappointment felt by broad segments of the public vis-a-vis the overall functioning of the political system in the current form," the research centre said.

Regent calls for healing Arab rifts

(Continued from page 1)

Relations between Amman and Kuwait began to thaw in late 1995 when Jordan began to distance itself from Baghdad calling on Baghdad to implement the U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Asked about the suffering of the Iraqi people, Dakhlil said his country wants to ease the suffering of the Iraqis but will not restore relations with Baghdad until it fulfills U.N. resolutions.

"Iraq has to abide by the U.N. Security Council resolutions, especially those dealing with the release of prisoners of war," Dakhlil said.

"We support the improvement of our Iraqi brothers' humanitarian condition and the easing of their suffering," he added.

The Kuwaiti minister and his delegation left Amman last night back home.

U.S. fighters fire on Iraqi planes

(Continued from page 1)

Bacon said there were reports that a MiG crashed because it ran out of gas. "We believe that to be the case but we do not have certainty on that right now," he said.

Prior to Tuesday, there had been two incidents in the no-fly zones — neither involving air-to-air combat — since the U.S. and British airstrikes of Dec. 16-19.

On Dec. 28, U.S. warplanes hit an anti-aircraft battery in the southern zone after being fired on from the ground. Iraq said four Iraqi soldiers were killed and seven wounded.

On Dec. 30, U.S. warplanes hit an anti-aircraft battery in the south. Iraq says a farmer was killed and two other civilians wounded.

Saddam announced earlier in a statement read on state-run Iraq television that the no-fly zones imposed on his country

have no basis in international law and vowed that Iraq will fight violations of its airspace "with all its courage and bravery."

Iraq's air force has more than 300 warplanes, but only about 55 per cent are properly serviced because of sanctions in force since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

In an address Tuesday, Saddam Hussein urged Arabs to stand behind Iraq and to rise up against Arab leaders who are allies of the United States and Britain.

"Revolt, sons of the great Arab Nation ... revolt and unseat those stooges, collaborators, thrones, dwarfs and cowards," Saddam said in a speech broadcast on one of the most popular satellite channels in the Arab World.

The broadcast came shortly after the clash between U.S. and Iraqi

planes in the south. Saddam did not mention the incident in the southern "no-fly" zone in his speech, which was carried by Qatar's Al Jazira Television. An English-language text was made available in Baghdad.

It was unclear if the speech — expected to be broadcast in Iraq on Wednesday, which is Army Day — was recorded before or after the incident.

On the ground, Iraq has launched a campaign to replace U.S. and British nationals with the U.N. humanitarian programme, focusing on staff working in the provinces.

"It's people who are outside of Baghdad," who are the main targets, said George Somerwill, spokesman for the humanitarian programme.

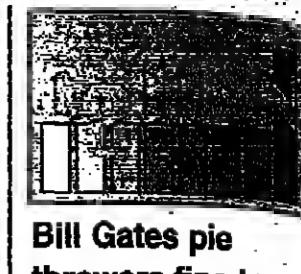
"The north is not a particular target but a number of people who are of concern to the Iraqi government are based in the

Britons working for U.N. contractors would be told to leave Iraq on completing their assignment.

Some 500 international U.N. staff implement an "oil-for-food" deal which enables Iraq to export fixed quantities of crude in return for badly-needed food and medicine.

Playing down Iraq's request, U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said an Iraqi official had verbally informed the United Nations that no U.N. workers would be expelled.

He had also given an assurance that the denial of entry visas was a temporary measure. But Rubin said any Iraqi effort to selectively exclude some nationalities from the U.N. programme "would contravene the U.N.'s worldwide policy of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality."



Bill Gates pie throwers fined

BRUSSELS (R) — Two people who threw custard pies at Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates in Brussels last February have been fined by a Belgian court. The two, who were not identified, were fined by the Police Court on Monday, a spokeswoman for the Public Prosecutor's Office said Tuesday. She said she could not detail the amount of the fine. Belgian newspaper "La Derniere Heure" reported the two pie throwers had each received fines of \$87.72. Gates was visiting Brussels following a meeting with world and business leaders in Switzerland when the attack occurred.

Scandal erupts over priest's marriage

BUENOS AIRES (APP) — A scandal has erupted in the northern province of Misiones after a local priest eloped with a former Catholic school teacher, a newspaper reported Tuesday. Filipino priest Josefino Krusillo of the Divine Word Church and Luisa Krupp, former vice-director of the Saint Francis of Assisi Institute were secretly married Dec. 18, the local paper said. The couple is currently honeymooning in the Philippines. El Territorio said, "Even though I understand and cannot pass judgement, it is a lamentable act, because it harms the community and the church itself."

King Hussein's meeting with President Clinton and Albright comes ahead of the King's departure today to London where he is due to spend several days before coming back home.

Singer faces jail for mafia sex blackmail link

ISTANBUL (APP) — One of Turkey's most popular singers faces up to 12 and a half years in jail for setting the mafia male model who was blackmailing her with sex videos. The Turkish press reported Tuesday. Sibel Can, a female singer and show star, is to be charged with wrongful deprivation of personal liberty and links with organised crime in an Istanbul State Security Court, the paper said. Can and her husband Hakan Ural, are accused of sending a gangster male model Can Kuzu, who was allegedly threatening to publish a video tape showing the singer having sex with a Turkish beauty king.

Two mice tale a nightmare for local franchiser

NEW YORK (R) — The story of two mice that celebrated their holidays in a New York doughnut store and got national media coverage has turned into a nightmare for a local franchiser who was sued by Dunkin' Donuts. The suit filed in Manhattan federal court seeks a court order to enforce a termination notice sent to the franchiser on New Year's Eve. The suit seeks unspecified damages and an order to force the franchiser to stop using Dunkin' Donuts trademarks. The story began on Dec. 30 when the New York Post reported it saw a mouse munching on doughnuts from the racks of a Dunkin' Donuts shop on Fifth Avenue.

MacDonald's apologises for running out of Big Mac

LONDON (R) — McDonald's Corp. apologised for running out of its famous Big Mac hamburgers. The British fast-food chain, which has 1,000 outlets in the United Kingdom, said it was sorry for the inconvenience caused to customers. The company said it had been hit by a "surge in demand" for the meal, which is the UK's best-selling meal. The company said it was sorry for the inconvenience caused to customers. The company said it had been hit by a "surge in demand" for the meal, which is the UK's best-selling meal.

Egyptian singer arrested over gambling charges

EGYPT (R) — Egyptian singer Samia Faiz was arrested on Tuesday morning for gambling. She was found with 1,000 Egyptian pounds in her possession. She was also found with a gambling machine in her car. She was released on bail.